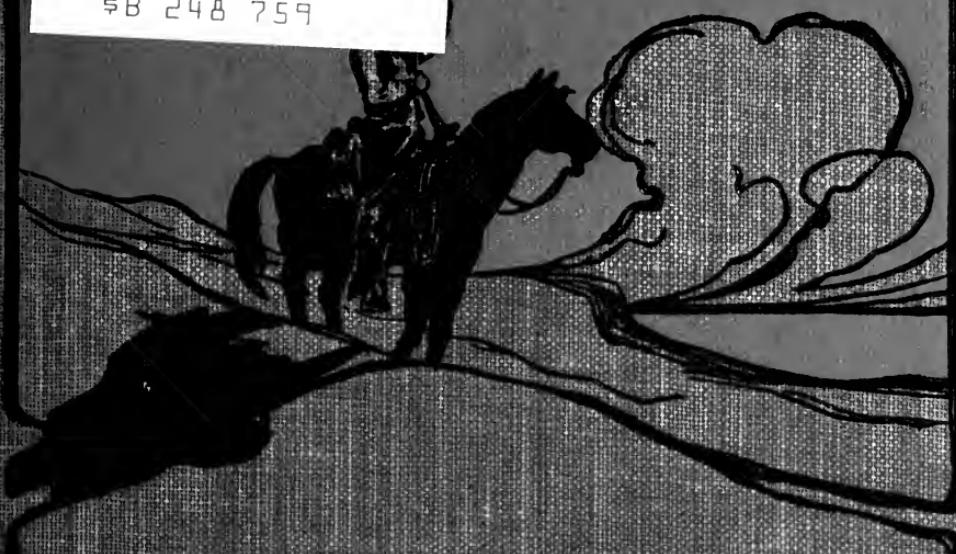


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*Wylackie
Jake
of Cavelo -*

• BY GEO. S. EVANS •

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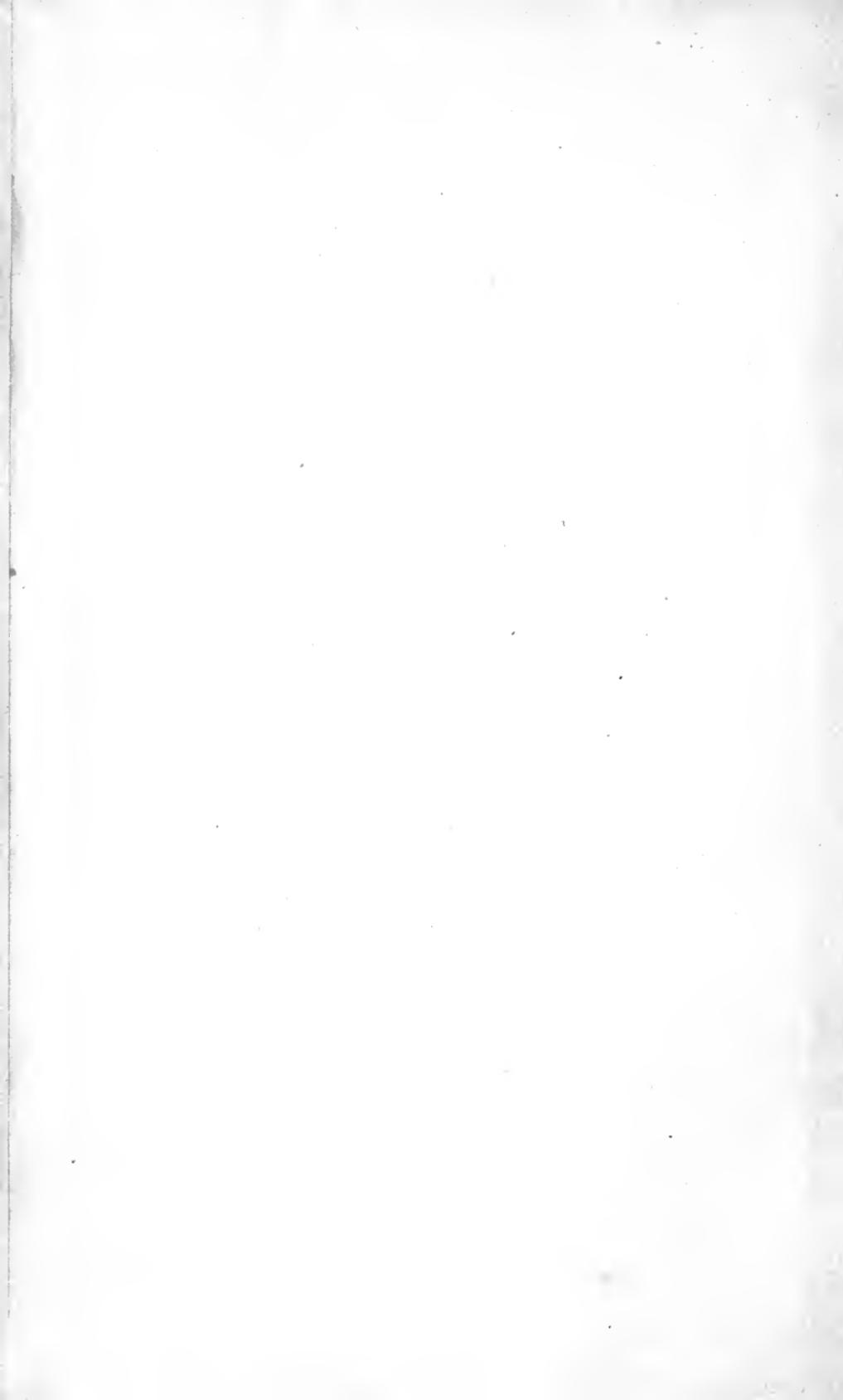
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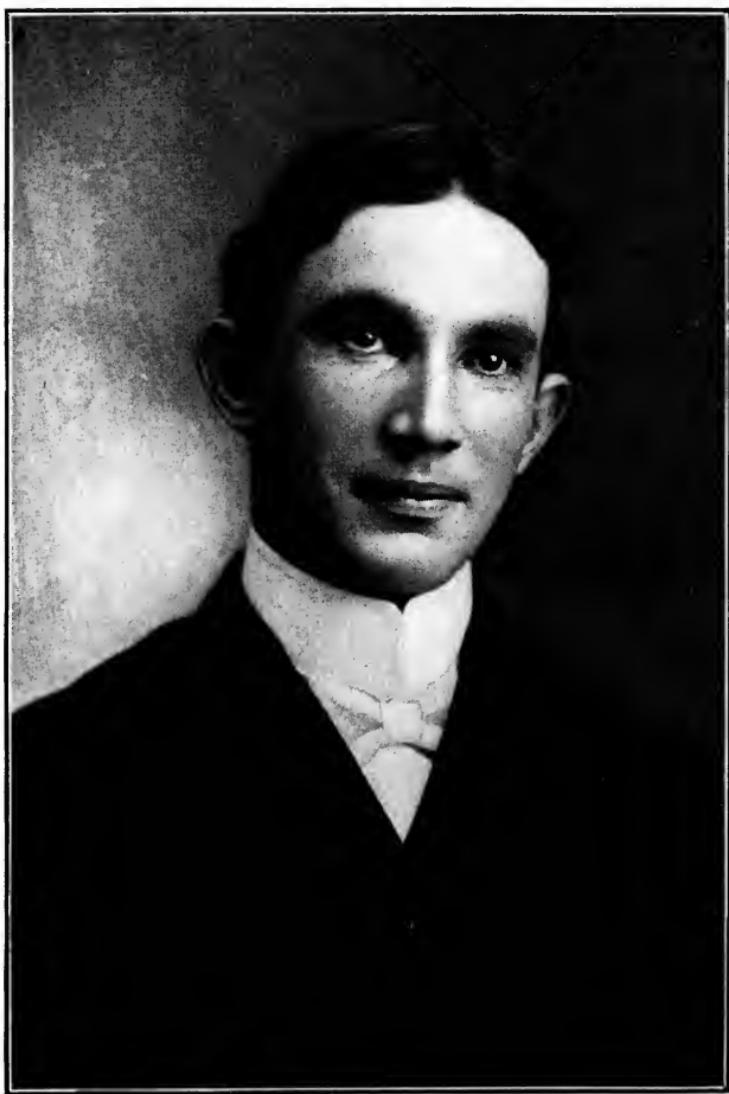
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GEORGE S. EVANS.

WYLACKIE JAKE OF COVELO

BY

GEORGE S. EVANS



PRESS OF
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— *Henry J. Rodgers* *20*

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION.

This volume of short stories of the late George S. Evans is presented to the public as a memorial to his literary accomplishments and aspirations. Its contents are the product neither of a mere beginner nor of one long trained in the literary profession.

Mr. Evans had been engaged in writing for publication only about three years. And even during that short space, he had devoted to literary work but the spare hours of a very busy life. The stories printed here are but a few of those that he had written.

The selections made for this publication, Mr. Evans had himself planned to collect into a book at some future day. He expected, of course, to add to their number. But it has seemed to his friends that he had already produced enough stories dealing with the same characters and having the same background to make a collection that would be acceptable to the public.

These stories do not represent what Mr. Evans would have become as a writer, for his work was constantly improving. But a number of them were deemed of requisite merit to be printed in the best Pacific Coast publications, and the others seem very little, if any, below those in interest. The friends of the late Mr. Evans, therefore, have every confidence that such a book as the present will please a great many readers.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

George Samuel Evans was born June 5, 1876, in Visalia, Tulare County, California. His parents were James and Mary N. Evans. He was the elder of two children, the other being a brother, Fred Evans.

When George Evans was about fourteen years of age, the family moved to Oakland. There he was educated in the high school. He spent one year at the University of California, then took up the study of the law, and was admitted to the bar in 1897. He devoted himself earnestly to his profession, and had made steady progress in it.

In 1901 Mr. Evans entered local politics, when he was elected on the Republican ticket as one of the Library Trustees of the Oakland Free Library. To this position he was re-elected in 1903, and was serving as such Trustee at the time of his death, May 26, 1904.

Mr. Evans had been connected with the First Unitarian Church of Oakland since boyhood. He was a member of many of its organizations, and always an enthusiastic worker in its activities.

Reading was with him a passion. He loved virile, robust books. The record of noble and stirring action never failed to arouse in him the glow of enthusiastic admiration. He was also very fond of

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

books of humor. He felt the stirrings of literary ambition several years ago, and while never relaxing his attention to his legal practice, devoted his spare time to writing.

Short stories, sketches of outdoor scenes, and bits of historical writing came rapidly from his pen. He met with the discouragements that most young writers encounter, but his perseverance triumphed over them, and in the end editors asked him to submit work.

During the last two years Mr. Evans opened up the vein of short-story writing that came to appeal most to him. He perceived that his best literary work was done in the portrayal of the scenes and people of the rugged cattle country of Mendocino and Tehama Counties, California. In the mountain fastnesses of these regions the cougar and the deer still find a breathing space, and the people exhibit all the naturalness of pioneers. Mr. Evans saw particularly the humorous side of the life whose heart is the village of Covelo, in northern Mendocino County. Had he lived, he would certainly have developed this phase of his writing as his main literary endeavor. But just as he was entering his literary land of promise, death called him, and he dropped forever the facile pen that was delighting a constantly increasing number of readers.



WYLACKIE JAKE OF COVELO

WRITTEN IN THE DUST.*

Rumor had it that buckaroo Wylackie Jake was a cattle rustler, a sheep stealer and a hog thief; but then Rumor in Round Valley is painted full of tongues. Perhaps Jake should have been in a penitentiary instead of on Hammer Horn Mountain with me. I say "perhaps," for I do not know. Had he lived in a community of prosperous grangers, there is probably no doubt but that it would have found a way of depriving itself of his company, whether the rumors concerning Jake were true or not. Prosperous grangers are not romantic. But Round Valley is a frontier community given over to grazing, and is possessed of the spirit of romance. It enjoyed the rumors about Jake's skill as a rustler, and Jake enjoyed the fierce light of notoriety that beat down upon him, and slyly painted more tongues on the already tongue-besmeared cloak of Rumor. There is reason to believe that a line would have been drawn to the toleration of Jake, even in romantic Round Valley, had he ever turned his attention to rumors about horse stealing. There was never any

* This story is republished here through the kindness of *Out West*, in which magazine it was first printed in the issue of September, 1904, under the title "The Red Cow Hide."

rumor about Jake and horses. He never talked about horses except in a straightforward, honest way.

All of the above insinuations place Jake before the reader in a bad light, and cause me to rush to his defense lest he be viewed in the worst possible light, without alternative. After a careful study of Jake, I am forced to believe that he was either the most consummate artist in the misuse of truth that ever lived in California, or else he was what he posed to a sprouting longhorn like myself—a self-confessed felon. Personally, I prefer to put Jake down as a liar, but am not dogmatic about it; nor do I condemn him very harshly if the classification be correct. Like a great many buckaroos, he was very talkative when in the company of a city-bred hunter. As he had not seen much of the world, and hence had little, save hearsay, whereon to base many of his impressions and opinions, perhaps he had been forced to draw on the springs of his imagination for conversational material. If you had never been permanently in a larger town than Covelo, with its 209 inhabitants, its five saloons and no reading room, and had listened from early boyhood to the truthful tales of old Mr. Doyle, President of the Round Valley Sportsmen's Club, you would, in all probability, tell the truth in a greatly magnified form. I say this for Jake in advance, by way of extenuation, if the reader conclude that Jake's tale herein reported was a product of his imagination, as I believe it to have been.

A stage driver told me that Jake was run out of Laytonville for shooting hogs because he didn't like

their owner, but the testimony of stage drivers should be weighed with extreme care. Their reputation for truth in the community where they reside is bad. Between Rumor, the stage driver, Jake's apparent frankness and my observation of him, I am placed in doubt as to his real character.

But one thing I do know for certain about Jake. He knew where the "big bucks" were. The people in Covelo, down to the stage driver, "lowed" this, and they "lowed" right. I am willing to forgive Jake everything he told on himself and almost everything the stage driver told me about him, even if true, for did not Jake "place" me where I could enjoy the fierce delights of the wilderness chase? I hired him to do this because his advertisement promised it, and he kept his promise. When I hired him I knew nothing about him except what the advertisement said, and if I went out to Hammer Horn Mountain with a man who should have been in prison, I did not know it. All of the rumors about him I heard later. The rumors to a certain degree corroborated what Jake told me himself, and of that let the following witness:

Jake and I were encamped on Thomas Creek, at the base of Hammer Horn. He called it "Tom's Crick." The map of the Geological Survey shows the name to be "Thomas" Creek, but that was not Jake's fault. I was watching a pot of boiling beans when my dark-hued guide appeared from behind the tent, a large piece of rawhide in one hand and an unfinished pair of bridle reins in the other.

"Where did you get that piece of rawhide?" I asked.

"Out of that alfora," he chuckled, pointing.

There was a moment's pause.

"Yes, I know," said I, "that is where you just got it. But where did it come from originally?"

He sat down on the cracker box and commenced braiding on the unfinished pair of reins.

"I have seen some fine bridle reins in my time," said I, "but those you are working on double discount all previous work I've seen."

He was not susceptible to compliments. He grunted, and then, after a long pause, said:

"Perhaps the reason these bridle reins look so well, and they are goin' to look better when finished, is because I know what kind of rawhide to make 'em out of. Now, a red cow yields the best rawhide. Nobody doubts that that knows it, but it ain't everybody that knows it. The colleges don't teach it. You see, I have the advantage over the city snoozers that braids reins for a livin', for they couldn't always get a red hide, even if they was onto the trick, while I always can. Some times in gettin' a red cowhide I've almost lost my own pelt. But so fur I've managed to keep out of the way of mushroom and other breeds of bullets. Gettin' this here hide almost made me a regular boarder of the State. But I got that hide for a dollar, and some short-horns got run out of the valley for a bad shot they didn't make.

"Just a year ago now I needed a red hide like a maverick needs brandin'. Of course I could have gone to Jim Harper's store and bought one, but that's too tame for me. What's the use of payin'

for things when all you have to do is to go and get 'em? A cow now and then ain't missed from a big band, or if she is, an old bear gets the credit for puttin' her on the missin' list. I yearned for a little touch of high life, as you city sports say. One morning early I lit out from my cabin, glued onto that pinto plug, for Leach Lake Mountain. I had my old 44 Winchester with me, because I didn't know but I might see a big old buck during the day. I went past Gray's singin' blithely that cow song with the chorus,

“‘An’ it’s hi yippie yea, yea, yea,’
the dogs there a chimin’ in, hit the trail, crossed
Williams Creek and began to climb. A little before
noon I reached Brown’s Camp. There was three
tenderfoot men a-campin’ there, and they wanted
to know would I stop and have dinner. Now there
are three things I can always do—drink, eat and
smoke. It ain’t often I get a drink; and them shorthorns
did shore have some genuine nectar. Of
course I stayed and ate. As soon as dinner was
over the three shorthorns said they were a goin’ to
cross the cañon and hunt deer; they expected to
stay for the evenin’ shootin’, and would I care to go
along. I told them I had to go and hunt cattle, and
would they excuse me. If I had told them I was
going to hunt cattle I would have been nigher to the
truth. From their camp I urged that pinto plug on
to the trail and made my way to the divide on the
north end of Leach Lake Mountain. Do you re-
member that place?”

I nodded.

"Well, there I found some fresh cow tracks. I took up the trail of the cows, and found they had back-tracked the horse trail some little distance below it. I passed the head waters of Williams Creek, and made my way down the cañon. By this time it was beginning to get late. Once or twice I heard rifles crack, and judged that my tenderfoot friends were a-tryin' to make game scarcer. I looked across the cañon at the Horse Pasture. The Horse Pasture, as you know, is a long meadow-like ridge that runs from Brown's Camp down to Williams Creek at the bottom of the cañon. About half way down is a big spring surrounded by wire grass, and there I expected to see my cows. I was disappointed at first, for I didn't see nothin' but a couple of white cows, but pretty soon a big red cow comes a hikin' out into the openin' from behind a manzanita bush. I stuck the spurs into that old pinto, crossed that rough crick and made my way up the Horse Pasture. Of course them wild range cattle was off like a lot of big bucks when a hound gets after 'em. Cow tails was just nacherally a flyin' in there as their owners skedaddled for the thick brush. I followed, and it was no easy work, either. More'n one buckaroo has had his topknot cracked in that country while buckarooin'. There was Smiling Dan. He got knocked off'en his horse by a overhangin' limb, and never saw nothin' but angels after he got hit. And Blue Jay Ford. He busted his foot wide open in the same damn old brush pile. Pretty soon the old pinto come up close to the runnin' cows. I pulls my old 44 out of the scabbard and rides up alongside

of my bridle reins, riata, hackmore material and lets a little sunshine into her. She just keeled over, and that's all there was to it. I lets the old pinto's reins hang down, stood the gun up again a pine tree, and starts to work a skinnin'. I had just finished the job when I happened to peer through the brush, and what met my eyes shore gave me heart action. Who did I see across the cañon a ridin' along but Tom Freeman, one of Frank Bell's importations—a lily white except when full of conversation water. The cow I had killed had Bell's brand on her. I could see Tom, but he couldn't see me unless I moved too much. I didn't move any too much. I rolls up the hide, grabbed the gun and climb up on to the old pinto and hiked out for the trail, stealthy like. The backbone of the Horse Pasture was just covered with tenderfoot tracks, and I rode right among 'em. Of course Tom seen me, as I thought he would. I knowed he was on my trail, and as my trail means cowhide or rustlin', he was follerin' it. I thought if I come right out he'd come right after me, and so overlook the measly carcass. Tom whooped, and I whooped back, and then Tom yelled for me to wait, but the echoes in that cañon always did make me hard of hearin'. I put my old pinto up to his best gait, but he ain't no genuine fast cloud of dust, and besides he was tired with the day's wanderin', and soon I see that Tom was a gainin' on me. I didn't want to lose that hide, and maybe my own, and so I made for the main thoroughfare for the Valley and home. I rode close, and the old pinto went up that Horse Pasture just a diggin'. I makes

my way into that tenderfoot rancheria, which the same bein' situate on a small flat. By this time my old pinto wasn't frisky like a young lamb, and I see I'd have to lose the hide or be nabbed with the goods. My hands were bloody, but I could explain that if pressed. There wasn't no tenderfoot men at home, and the latch string was a-hangin' out ; but I wasn't as interested in that as I was in a clothesline that was a-hangin' out, too. I pulled the old pinto plug up alongside of it and hung my red cowhide out to dry. Then I moved on. No, I didn't leave no other cyard. I taken and made my way to the Weaver-Round Valley Trail at the top of the ridge.

"Judas Priest ! When I got to the top of the ridge, if there wasn't a big old four-point buck a-standin' with his head in the air, a-sniffin' the evenin' breeze. Buck meat always did look good to me. And I just put that old buck's rockin' chair head on to the ground in a second. I guess I could explain how blood come on my hands now. I goes down to where he was a-kickin' his last, and starts to dress him, when up rides Tom Freeman, his bronco just a pantin' and a sweatin'.

" 'Jake, why in hell didn't you stop when I hollered at you ?' he says.

" 'Was you a hollerin' at me ?' says I, innocent like. 'I thought you was a callin' to some of them shorthorn hunters or a talkin' polite to stock, and so I didn't stop to investigate,' says I, 'whether you wanted me or not.'

" 'What's that red hair a doin' on your shirt sleeve ?' says he, suddenly.



"I looked at my shirt sleeve in a deliberate manner, and there was several cow hairs on it from that bridlereins material.

"'That? Oh, that must be some hairs off'en my horse,' says I.

"'Red hair off'en a pinto horse,' says he, a grinnin'. 'That's a good one. When you tell a lie, Jake,' says he, 'you always tell a 'damn lie, and so audacious like that it makes a fellow too polite for to call the bluff.'

"I went on a dressin' the buck.

"'Did you hear any shootin' just south of the Horse Pasture?' he asks.

"'Yes. I heard a 30:30 go off down in there,' says I.

"'Well, I heard a rifle echo from over in there, and it was from black powder. You didn't shoot, did you?'

"'Nope. The only time I've shot to-day was at this here buck. But thinkin' again,' I says, knockin' the brim of my Stetson back, 'I believe maybe I did hear a black powder gun go off down there. It must have been Alf Redfield shootin'; he's down in there to-day.'

"'That's another one of yours, Jake. Alf ain't there at all. I met him and Jim Randolph and Ike Wharton early this morning at the foot of Wylackie Hill, bound for Red Mountain.'

"'Oh, well,' says I, 'what's there strange about who fired a black powder gun there?'

"'Nothin'" says he, 'except there's a fresh cow carcass, with the hide off, down there, and your

horse's tracks around the place, and I'm almost plumb positive I heard a black powder gun go off down there about a hour ago, and you've got a black powder gun, an' I think you're the man I'm after. I'm a goin' to take you to Weaver, Jake,' he says, after a pause, 'an' turn you over to the authorities for shootin' that cow.'

"No you ain't, pardner," says I, quietly turnin' the buck over on his back, a holdin' my knife betwixt my teeth. 'I don't know nothin' about your damn old cowhide except I seen it a hangin' on a clothes-line down at that shorthorn wickiup. This time, for once, Tom, you're all balled up on the tracks, Tom. I think you'll find this here theery of the case is about right,' I says, rollin' a coffin tack and lightin' it. I blew out a cloud of smoke, and resooms; 'One of them shorthorns must 'uv killed your boss's cow, thinkin' it was a deer. That very thing happened down at Long's on the South Fork last summer, when a citified chap with a new gun just nacherally bought more beef than he could eat at one sittin'. Tenderfoots mistake each other for deer all the time, and a cow looks more like a deer than a tenderfoot. I'll bet a tenderfoot or Alf Redfield killed your cow.'

"Your theery of the case is mighty interestin'," says Tom, 'but it ain't convincin'. You leave some evidence out of all consideration; and as for Alf, why, as I says, I seen Alf down at Wylackie Hill.'

"Well," says I, 'Alf Redfield can back on his tracks, caint he?'

"He didn't pay any attention to this question, but says: 'There's a line of your horse's tracks a leadin'

from that cow carcass to where the hide's a hangin', and from there to here, and you've been suspected of this here same business before.'

"Well," says I, in a injured tone, 'I do hate to have anybody doubt my honesty and word.'

"Oh, hell," says he, sort of skeptical like.

"I lifted the buck into the saddle and began lashin' him onto the pinto.

"I'll tell you what," says I. "I'll go back to that shorthorn outfit with you—and they were shore enough tenderfoots. The way they packed a mule! If Johnnie or old Mr. Doyle could only have seen it!"

Here I laughed.

"You throw a hitch fair to middlin' yourself, but at first you was a regular lily of the valley at the business. Well, them tenderfeet's packin' was rawer than yours ever was. They packed a mule so's he looked like a header wagon. I says to him: 'I'll go back with you to that tenderfoot place, and you'll be convinced that I'm as innocent of what you charge me with as Sam Blaine was of shootin' old Charlie Porter.'

"That's a likely idea," he says. "If you are that innocent you needn't go to Weaver, Jake. We'll go down to the tenderfoot camp."

"I led my old pinto plug loaded with the deer, and Tom followed. When we got down a ways I saw a campfire through an openin' and heard a loud laffing. We kept on, and the laffing kept on, too, and soon we came to the camp. Two of the three city chaps was still a laffin'.

" 'What's the joke, pardners?' says Tom. 'Tell it to me and my friend here, so's we can all laugh.'

" 'The drinks are on Bill,' says the fellow, handling the skillet at the campfire. 'When Frank an' I came into camp, damn me if Bill wasn't here alone with a red cowhide a hangin' on the clothesline, lookin' at the same in a quizzical manner. Frank an' I killed a couple of big deer over there by that granite knob, but Bill seems to 'uv killed a cow.' Here he burst into a laugh, an' Frank done the same. I laughed too. Tom, he didn't laugh, but acted kind of mad like. He looked at the hide, to see if it was one of Bell's cows, an' so did I. I knew it was for certain before lookin', but I had a part to play, an' Tom wanted to make certain.

" 'Which way did you come up?' says Tom, politely enough. 'Right up through the Horse Pasture,' says Bill. Frank, he up an' says: 'Me an' Jack come up through the Horse Pasture an' found a newly killed cow down there, an' when we come to camp we found Bill a lookin' at this here cowhide in a quizzical sort of a way, an' we think Bill killed the animal.' Here they both laffed again.

"I felt real sorry for Bill. Innocence sufferin' for guilt ain't such a fine sight when they are both together, an' innocence don't know that guilt is clos to hand.

" 'I didn't kill that cow,' says Bill. 'I come up through the Horse Pasture about an hour ago, an' got to camp, an' stayed here a while an' then I went to the spring, an' while I was there I heard a couple of fellers a hollerin', an' when I got back this here

cowhide was a hangin' on the line, an' I could see that gentleman there on the bay horse a goin' up through that pine thicket towards the main trail. The tracks of two horses was right through camp.'

" 'Oh, give it to us easy,' says his two pardners.

" 'That's what I'm a doin',' says he.

" 'Well, gentlemen,' says Tom. 'I guess your friend Bill here'll have to pay for the cow; he seems to know more about it than anybody else. She belonged to my boss, an' I'll give you a receipt for the money.'

" 'It looks as if you'll have to pay,' said Frank and the grub wrangler to Bill.

" 'Damn if I pay for any cow I didn't kill,' says Bill. 'I'll stand a lawsuit first.'

" 'You might stand a suit,' says Frank, 'but it's my opinion you'd lose it. They tell me the only man around here that knows anything about law is Jack Johnson, an ex-convict, an' he's only up on criminal law. They always appoint him bailiff when they's a case on, because he knows how to maintain the dignity of the Court, him a havin' observed the bailiff in the Superior Court at Ukiah.'

" 'Yes,' said the cook man, 'you might as well pony up, you'll get the rest of us in trouble if you don't. Besides, you want to give up law an' go into the cattle business, an' here's a chance to begin on a modest scale—a cow carcass an' a cowhide.'

" 'You fellows stop this monkey business an' dig up that money right away,' says Tom. 'I've got to get to town by some after dark, an' I cain't waste no more time.'

“ ‘You don’t really mean that you expect Bill to pay for that cow, do you?’ says Frank.

“ ‘That’s just what I mean,’ says Tom.

“ ‘Well, Mr. Cowboy,’ says Frank, ‘we ain’t a goin’ to be bluffed into payin’ for a cow we didn’t kill. That feller there with you, with the blood on his hands, looks as if he might know somethin’ about who killed the cow.’

“ ‘That’s buck’s blood,’ says I, a holdin’ up my hands.

“ ‘I’ll give you just two minutes to pay for that cow,’ says Tom, a gettin’ off his horse, ‘or I’ll take the whole bunch of you clear to Weaver for killin’ that cow, an’ I guess you’ll find it’ll be cheaper to pay for her than to make that trip—it a bein’ over a hundred miles by trail.’

“Tom was shore a throwin’ it into ‘em.

“Tom he up an’ says, ‘Are you a goin’ to pay?’ an’ with that he put his hand on his gun, and the shorthorn called Bill up an’ says, ‘How much is it?’ an’ Tom he says, ‘Thirty dollars.’

“ ‘Take your money,’ says Bill, an’ Tom took it, an’ then he up an’ says: ‘Unless you fellows want to run foul of some of the Round Valley Boys, I’d advise you to hike out for your native heath. This here white man’s country up here is a bein’ overrun every summer by a lot of shorthorns that doan’t know putty from beeswax.’ ‘Nor deer from cows,’ says I, ‘an’,’ says he, ‘I’m a gettin’ plumb sick an’ tired of it,’ says he, his anger a risin’. ‘You’ll have to get off’en Bell’s land, anyhow. I’ll let you stay till to-morrow mornin’.’

"An' with that Tom rode off. I a havin' the deer on my horse an' no mule with me, had to walk down the mountain, an' so I didn't go with Tom.

"I up an' says to Bill, 'How much'll you take for your hide?' 'Oh, shut up!' says he. 'Now, look here,' says I, 'perhaps I'd better call my friend back here. I ain't a lookin' for trouble, but if you ain't polite to me, you ain't polite to him. What injures an' degrades me has its effect on him. An' unless you talk to me real civilized like, I'm a goin' to call him back. I ain't a quick an' suddent kind of a man, while he is, an' does the fightin' for us both.'

"'Well,' says Bill; 'I'll take a dollar for the hide.'

"'Done,' says I, a handin' him the dollar an' him a handin' me the hide.

"'S'long,' says I to them, an' with that I led my horse towards the trail.

"The next day I met Tom in front of the Dewey just at stage time. Them three shorthorns was there ready to go, an' when the driver cracked the whip an' the stage wasn't nothin' but dust, Tom he asked me to come in an' have somethin'. When we had had a couple of drinks, Tom looks at me from under his shore enough Stetson an' says, 'Jake, it's all over now, but didn't you shore kill that cow?'

"'Tom,' I says, real solemn like, a lookin' at him straight, 'you just write that question in the dust an' the rain'll settle it.' "

A MATCHMAKER OF THE FOOTHILLS.*

"Well, 'Long' John, how are you and your girl getting along?"

"Long" John Jordan blushed slightly. His face was so tanned and weather-beaten that it took a very deep blush to make a slight one.

"To tell you the truth, Mr. Johnson, we ain't gettin' along at all, to speak of. I don't seem to be making any headway, and I'm almost clean discouraged."

He looked dejectedly at the horn of his saddle, and rolled his quirt between his hands.

"Say, Mr. Johnson," he burst out, impulsively, "they tell me that you're pretty expert with women —that you know all about 'em; that you can tell when they're foolin' and when they're in earnest."

Mr. Johnson's vanity went up several points. He recalled that some of Jordan's friends thought him a "little simple-minded," and he decided to see how gullible the man really was. He hesitated a moment, and then said in a confidential tone: "Yes, I know a little somethin' about 'em, havin' been married three times. I've had a chance to do a little observin'. But," he added, ruefully, "I don't know all about 'em, and neither does any man. Generally, just when you get one rounded up and are ready to throw the rope, she stampedes, and then you have

* Accepted for publication by "Sunset Magazine."

to begin all over again. It's easier to round up a thousand head of stock than one woman."

"You make the case out pretty gloomy," said "Long" John.

"It ain't so gloomy as you think. They don't stampede because they really want to get away; they merely want to see if you'll follow. If you do, you'll finally round 'em up. You've got to keep at it, that's all. Now look at the case of Jim Raglan. Jim was in love with that Daly girl. She wouldn't have anything to do with him, to speak of. I knew the Daly girl, and I knew she was high-strung; that the man that got her would have to be the ruler of the herd. I told Jim this, and showed him what he'd have to do. Jim done it, and she's now Mrs. Jim Raglan. And that ain't the only one. There was Dutch Bill and his love affair; but that's too long to tell here. Bill done what I told him to do, and Bill got the girl, and I've got Bill's everlasting thanks for it now. I may have Bill's hate for it some day, but I ain't got it yet."

"Mr. Johnson, I've heard both of them stories, heard 'em from Jim and from Bill. You done both of them good by your advice. I wish you'd interest yourself and help me as you helped Jim and Bill."

"Long" John had never before been confidential with any person over his love affairs. He had always maintained a sullen silence, or had burst out into fiery expletives when chaffed about them, in inverse proportion as he stood in awe of the chaffer. But here was a man in whom he confided, a man with whom he felt at perfect liberty to talk about his

affairs. Johnson saw that he was making progress, and continued :

“Young man, if you really want to buckle that girl to you, I can tell you how to do it.

“Whoa, there, you Jake, ain’t you had enough to eat to-day?”

He jerked the reins, and the horse threw his head up and champed wildly at the bit.

He perceived by the look in Jordan’s weather-beaten countenance that he wanted to “buckle” the girl to him, and accordingly resumed :

“I’ve known Alice Thomas all her life. She ain’t hardly the girl for you ; but since you’re in love with her, that doesn’t make any difference to you. I’ll pass that fact by, and assume she is.”

“Long” John turned his face away and looked over the wide expanse of plain, with the snow-capped mountains in the distance.

“She’s a girl that’s kind of stuck up ; that is, you think so till you know her. She’s read a lot of them old romances, and she’s more stuck on some of the trim, well-dressed heroes she’s read about than she is on any cow puncher around here. But your case ain’t hopeless. I understand Alice ain’t showed that you’re the only man in the world for her, but she hasn’t fired you entirely, and when a girl don’t do that there’s some hope. Now you are a cattleman, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” said Jordan, “I’m a cattleman and cow puncher rolled together.”

“Well, you don’t look like one. Where is your blue flannel shirt, with the red silk handkerchief ?

Your hat looks as though it had been used as a drinking cup. And where are your chaps with the fringes on, and where is your gun—man, where is your gun? Don't you know that women admire the bold, free-and-easy chap? They like neatness, and insist that a man look and act his part. You don't look your part, and you don't act it. Now, I'll tell you what to do. The next time you go to town, you buy a big gun and a 'shore enough' Stetson; fit yourself up like a roaring cowboy. Then get on your horse, and when you get to within about a quarter of a mile of the Thomas house, spur him into a run, and yell and take on some. Sing a roundelay if you can. Women admire the chirping troubador. If the dog runs out, take a shot at him, and if you kill him, so much the better. He caused my team to run away the other day. What you want to do is to fix up so you'll look real Texas like. Act your part. Just raise hell and put a chunk under it. Do as I've told you and you'll win. I must go on, so long. Don't forget the dog." Johnson rode away, chuckling to himself. Jordan, deeply impressed, spurred up his horse.

* * * * *

It was almost sundown, and the mountain sides were putting on their cloaks of shadow. Through the space between the high peaks the red rays of the sun glowed, and the fields of eternal snow were slowly incarnadined. Near by the trees shook in the breeze, crows cawed and magpies chattered on their way to roost. The air was vocal with the noises of the barnyard—the loud bawling of calves,

the cackling of geese, and the shrill, fiendish shriek of the guinea hen.

Miss Alice Thomas sat on the front porch, absorbed in a story; one of the ranch dogs was curled up at her feet. Far down the winding road a horseman came toward the Thomas house. He was gotten up in true cowboy style. On his head was a "shore enough Stetson"; a 45-caliber six-shooter was in his cartridge belt. His saddle was silver mounted, and long tapaderos hung from the stirrups. He looked "Texas like."

Of a sudden he spurred his horse from a trot into a lope, and from a lope into a run. The horse's hoofs pattered on the hard road, and dust followed in his wake.

"Hy ah, whoop ee!" yelled the rider. Fence posts sped by, and the rider rapidly approached the ranch. Miss Thomas looked up. The horseman drew nearer. He sang:

"Then the bronc' began to pitch,
And I began to ride;
He bucked me off a cut bank,
Well, I nearly died!"

The dog arose, the hair on his back bristled, his tail straightened; he began to growl.

"Whoop ee!" yelled the rider. The girl stood up, her mother came rushing to the porch. The dog ran to the gate.

"Whoop ee!"

"Who is that drunken idiot, Alice?"

"I'm not sure, mother, but I think it's Mr. Jordan."

The dog ran swiftly up the road to meet the disturber of the peace, barking savagely.

"Whoop la!" yelled the rider. The dog snapped at the horse's heels. The rider drew his revolver, took aim at the dog, and fired. A startled yelp greeted the explosion, and the dog rolled over in a heap. The man rode to the gate, and, checking his horse, suddenly leaped from the saddle and started up the walk leading to the porch.

Mother and daughter walked forth to meet him.

"What kind of carryin' on is this, Mr. Jordan?" asked Mrs. Thomas. "I don't see any occasion for you taking on this way. What do you want to come riding up here like a wild man for?"

Mr. Jordan removed his hat.

"Well, now, Mrs. Thomas, you see——"

"No, I don't see. I want to know what you mean by carrying on in such a way."

Miss Thomas was thinking. She had never before seen a man who so completely looked his part. Many of the men around pretended to be cowboys, but none of them looked it as Mr. Jordan did. Mr. Jordan's fringed chaps, his blue flannel shirt and the red silk handkerchief carefully knotted around his neck certainly proclaimed his calling. His short clipped mustache gave him a daring look. His sinuous muscles moved with easy grace. He had the look of a man who could do things. Perhaps she had been mistaken in her estimate of him. Perhaps he was more of a man than she had given him credit for.

"Now look what you've done—you've killed poor Caesar out there," she heard her mother say.

A smile crossed Jordan's lips.

"It's no laughing matter. We don't live in Texas, and I'd like to know what you mean, fixing up in such an outlandish manner here in California; and why did you kill Caesar?"

"Now, mother, don't be too hard on John," said Alice. It was the first time she had ever called him John.

"Thank you, Alice, for taking my part," he said. It was the first time he had ever dared call her Alice.

"I don't thank you for it, Miss Thomas," said her mother.

"Won't you come and sit on the porch awhile, John?" asked the girl.

"I'm sorry I killed Caesar, ma'am," said Jordan to the mother.

"I'm glad you did," said Alice. "He has always annoyed people by running out and barking. He caused Mr. Johnson's team to run away the other day. I'm glad you killed him."

The mother haughtily withdrew to the house.

The next day Jordan met Mr. Johnson.

"Well, how'd you come out?" was the question of the latter.

"Oh, said Jordan, smiling, "love me, love my dog" isn't the rule in this country."

WHEN UNDERSTANDING CRIED ALOUD AT "FRYING PAN."*

Wylackie Jake and I were seated on a boulder near the summit of Hammer Horn. I was getting my breath back after our long and tiresome climb. Jake was rolling a cigarette.

"It begins to dawn on me," said I, "that we've had a tough climb of it."

"Without meanin' no offense," said he, "you remind me of some people that doan't never understand a thing until they've been through it. Now you ought to a knowed that this here mountain'd be a mean climb by lookin' at it; but you come right along with me without doin' any investigatin' yourself, an' now that you're up here, you begin to talk about it a comin' slowly over your system that you've had a tough climb."

He paused, finished rolling his cigarette and blew out a cloud of smoke. I looked over the vast expanse of mountain waste. All around us were mountains piled on mountains, vast tracts of forest verdure—a wilderness ocean mingling with the blue sky.

* This story is republished here through the kindness of the San Francisco *Argonaut*, in which weekly it was first printed in the issue of April 25, 1904, under the title of "The Big Red Steer."

"Your condition of mind an' your remark you just tooted forth," said my guide, "reminds me of a little happenin'. You see that ridge away to the south there?"

I assented.

"That's where pretense an' sham stops," he continued. "Over beyond it is a little mean world where men pretend they're good an' honest an' upright, and nobody there's got the nerve for to call their bluff. An' so they go through life a sayin' what they doan't think, an' a thinkin' what they doan't say. They gold brick the widow an' the orphan an' the poor into believin' that they've shore got their interests at heart, when their own interests is all they're a lookin' out for. They use biled shirts an' white ties an' silk hats as part of their tools.

"On this side of that ridge a man's rated at what he is. There ain't so much crowdin' an' trampin', an' you can stand off a hundred yards an' study your friends an' acquaintances an' enemies. This a bein' so, everybody gets rated proper. So long as you're quick an' clever here you'll get along, but you mustn't never make a botch of what you're about. We all here'll stand anything but failure. Now, I'm a rustler by occupation. Everybody in Round Valley knows it one way an' another, an' I don't deny it; but does that put me under ground? Shore not. I've never been seen a rustlin', an' I've never been caught with the goods. Consequence is, I'm set down as a successful man. If I done petty or mean stealin' I'd shore get caught, an' probably have a piece of hemp put around my lily white neck an' a crowd of ad-

mirin' friends at the other end, an' the limb of a tree as my roostin' place. When it was all over them same friends 'd put me down as a victim of luck.

"But I'm a successful rustler on a big scale. Over on the other side of the ridge if I done petty or aggravatin' stealin' they'd send me to jail an' look down on me. But if I corralled a million or so of somebody else's dollars, no matter what way, an' give some of it to a college, I'd have my phiz in the papers, an' a statute in a square. If I done the things over there I do here they'd say I was tough instead of ratin' me as a man no worse than the next one if he had my nerve. All of which leads me to again say that whatever you do out here do it well, or don't do it at all. If you're a goin' to sell liquor to Injuns, do up the job right. Don't bluff about it nor theorize nor temporize. Just sell it to 'em. If you're a goin' to rustle, why rustle along the lines that common sense dictates is best. This all leads me to what I'm a goin' to tell you about.

"They's quite a bunch of fellows that works for Frank Bell that thinks they're better'n the rest of us around here. They all air quick on the trigger, good buckaroos an' first-class bronco twisters. But they've got a lot of ideas that ain't native to the soil here, an' that's where the trouble comes in. They shore has it in for rustlers like me an' Alf Redfield. Tom Freeman, an' Jack Wilson, an' Ernie Mason, an' Sam Blaine is always a lookin' for Wylackie Jake an' Alf Redfield signs. Me an' Alf knows the mountains thoroughly. We doan't need no landmarks. That's where we've got the best of the other

fellers—all but Ernie Mason, him a havin' herded sheep from North Yallo Bally to Sanhedrin, knows the mountains first class.

"One time them four fellows was out a roundin' up some of Bell's stock, an' somehow or other they got the idea into their noodles that me an' Alf had rustled a big red steer—the prince of the band. For onct me an' Alf was as innocent as I was of tryin' to bushwhack ol' Jack Johnson the time they had me up for that. Me an' Alf was a huntin' away over on Windy Mountain, an' them four buckaroos was a makin' Joe Meder's cabin on Frying Pan Flat their headquarters. They come out boldly an' accused me an' Alf of concealin' the steer. I told 'em we didn't know what'd become of their old longhorn, an' that I hoped the day'd come when that fact'd be brought home to 'em real suddenly. I knowed they didn't, or wouldn't believe a word of what I told 'em, an' so I hoped for somethin' real stunnin' in the divulgin' line.

"They's some people that doan't seem to be able to round up nothin' proper. You have to go at 'em like you was a goin' quartz minin'. You have to dig through their hair, an' then you have to drill through their skull, an' then set off a big blast of giant powder where the thinker works, before you can make 'em understand. Some people just nacherally has to have the whole universe put into a uproar before they'll learn anything. You shore has to arm yourself with a scantlin' an' knock 'em down before they'll believe anything. I doan't like people that's hard of hearin'. I'm down on mutes, an' I ain't got

no use for gabblers. These here people that acts wise because they doan't know no better hadn't ought to be allowed around.

"Me an' Alf had a sneakin' idea where the steer was, but we all decided to find him an' bring him home to the lilies of the valley in a startlin' way, rather 'an to tell 'em about our idea. We talked the matter over an' decides that we'd hit the understandin' of them fellows about the same way a mushroom bullet hits a buck, an' that's a hittin' in a suddent sort of a way.

"So the next afternoon me an' Alf went out to hunt the big red steer. I thought I knowed where he was, an' so we didn't waste no time a lookin' an' circlin' around for his tracks. I knowed he was somewhere in Cottonwood Cañon. That wouldn't be very useful information to everybody, because Cottonwood Cañon ain't got no bottom to it, an' it's all cut up with rock slides, an' timber patches, an' precipices, an' boulders, an' brush thickets. Why, you could put a thousand big red steers in there an' not find hide nor hair of 'em unless you was a shore expert buckaroo. I knowed the steer was in the vicinity of a big deer lick a long way down, for I'd seen him there several times while huntin'. If Tom an' Jack an' Ernie an' Sam 'd treated me like one man to another, I'd a told 'em where he was. But when a fellow accuses me of stealin' when I ain't guilty, I'm not a goin' out of my way to help him round up what he's a huntin' for.

"Me an' Alf slid down into that cañon pretty fast. Our horses shore had to dig into the loose rock to

keep from goin' down a flyin'. They grunted, an' sweated, an' snorted, an' coughed. After a mighty long time we all come close up to the deer lick. Three or four ol' does with their fawns, an' a young buck or two hiked out like sixty. I looks around, an' up on the mountain side across the creek was the hunk of beef with the red hide on. He was a sniffin' an' lookin' around, the way a steer will. I give a whoop an' rode at him, an' he rolled his tail for the high spots, an' me an' Alf a follerin', hollerin' like a couple of buck Injuns at a Injun dance. That steer just nacherally seemed to think that all buckaroos in the Valley was a chasin' him, an' he just run to beat hell. My pinto ain't very young, but he's old enough to understand the ways of a two-year-ol' steer. A horse doan't have to be very well up in years to be able to do that. Of course the steer run in the wrong direction. They always do. My old pinto makes a circle to head him off, an' Alf's roan done the same. It was risky business. If you ain't been in Cottonwood Cañon you doan't know how it lays. They's only one cañon in all this here country that's rougher, an' that's Devil's Cañon, off east of Red Mountain. Our broncos was in danger, an' we was in danger all the time. A mis-step might uv put us on the list of missin'. After a long run I got just above the steer, an' like a fool throws my rope over his horns. My horse stops short, the way a cow horse should, an' set back on his tail, an' the big red steer stopped like a choo choo that's run into a boulder on the track. His sudden stop pulls my horse down the steep mountain side, an' afore I

knowed it I found myself a slidin' just in front of the horse. We was both aimed straight for the steer. He wasn't a gettin' up in a quick an' lively manner. Fact was, the shock had almost knocked his daylights out. Alf come a tearin' an' whoopin' an' scairt the life back into the steer, an' he come right for me 's soon as he could get up. I pulls my gun an' was a goin' to kill some fresh beef, when Alf let his rope fly an' caught the long-lost steer around the neck. He wasn't active an' agile like after Alf give him a yank that pulled his props out from under him. I gathered myself an' my horse together an' rides behind the docile animal, the same a havin' his eyes a bulgin' out an' his tongue a stickin' forth. When he draws back I cracks him in the flank with my shore enough Stetson.

"Now we was shore like rustlers, an' if our friends had a come along we'd a been catched in such a way we couldn't a had nothin' to say. But we knowed them fellows'd gone to North Yallo Bally that day, an' so we was as safe from 'em as from the Sheriff, him a bein' in Red Bluff, seventy miles away. We drove, an' led our steer along as if it was a suckin' calf. Onct in a while he'd try some funny business, but by the time his ol' topknot cracked the ground four or five times he seen he was up against a couple of buckaroos that shore knowed their business. We led and drug him up out of the cañon an' across the Saddle, an' then over on the south side of Windy. We finally got him to our camp an' tied him to a pine tree, where he bellered an' bawled an' pawed the dust. We all got supper, an' then I told

Alf to turn in an' let me set by the fire an' figure out how to bring it home to Tom an' Jack an' Ernie an' Sam that they was mistaken about us a takin' the steer. Alf knowed I'd think up some startlin' way. Him an' me has butted around together so long that each has implicit confidence in the other on such a layout. So Alf rolled up in his blankets an' commenced to saw logs, while me an' the big red steer sat up an' ruminated about how we'd surprise the boys at Joe Meder's cabin the next morning. I sat on a log in front of the fire an' rolled cigarettes an' looked into the bright flame, a thinkin' an' a figurin'. I guess I figured on nigh onto fifty schemes, an' none of 'em didn't suit. I was just about ready to give up an' let the steer loose, when a idea struck me that was so good an' genuine I near hugged myself. That's the way with ideas. A lot of measly, ornery ones come a troopin' down the trail a sendin' up dust, an' a makin' noise, bellerin' an' bawlin', an' you shore decides they ain't any of 'em worth roundin' up, an' after a while when the dust's cleared away, along comes one about sixteen hands high, weighin' about 1,200 pounds, with his hide all shinin' an' a good light in his eye, an' you shore lets your rope fly, an' makes him yourn. That was the way it was with me. I kicked the fire so's it flared up, rolled a final coffin tack, an' then went to snoozin' on my spruce bough bed.

"Away early I wakes up an' kicks Alf out, an' told him to help me prepare for an early morning surprise party over at Joe Meder's cabin. Alf growled about me a gettin' him up at such an un-

earthly hour, but I says, 'Alf, if my idea's a goin' to be carried out we've got to get over to the cabin mighty early an' before any of them boys is a stirrin'. After we get there, if my theories is carried out they'll be a stirrin' an' steppin' around pretty lively. We'll furnish the beef for the surprise breakfast, an' the boys over there can put up the flapjacks an' coffee.'

"Alf he wanted me to tell him all about it, but I wouldn't give my plan away even to him. I told him to do just as I told him, an' he would shore get animation for his money. Alf knowed I was a givin' it to him straight, an' he closed up as tight as a old bear in a tree middle of winter. We cinched our saddles onto our horses an' then rode over to see how our captive prince was a gettin' on. He was shore mighty ugly, but me an' Alf was uglier. Whenever you run up against somethin' that doan't just understand your ways, an' backs up an' balks an' rairs an' paws the air, just back up an' balk an' rair an' paw the air worse than it does, an' it'll walk right up an' eat out of your hand. Shore, that's a good workin' rule.

"I slipped the noose off'en the tree, an' Mr. Steer give a jump like he was a howlin' cougar a lookin' for fawn meat. I was a expectin' some such move, an' so was my old pinto, an' the steer wasn't a lookin' for ugly action from us. When he jumped, my old pinto sat right down on his haunches. I wraps the riata around the horn of the saddle, an' the steer stood on his head like he was an acrobat. He got up an' looked kind of cowed, which was proper, him a belongin' to the cow family.

"I told Alf to bring my red blanket, an' Alf never asked what for. He done just as I told him. We all drove an' led the steer up Windy from the south an' then down toward Frying Pan Flat. Joe Meder's cabin is at the north end of the Flat, an' faces south.

"The stars had just closed up for the day, an' a bluejay began a jawin' at a chipmunk. Our old steer wasn't very much on the fight by now, but I 'lowed before we got done with him he'd be most ready to charge a snarlin' old grizzly. I led the meat up to within about a hundred feet of the cabin door, an' then turned the riata over to Alf. I now gets off'en my old pinto an' leads him over behind some pine trees an' left him a standin'.

"'Now, Alf,' I whispers, 'you give me that red blanket.' Alf done it. 'Now slip the riata loose.' Alf done that. 'Now hike to them pines an' watch the proceedin'.' Alf left me. The steer he didn't know just what to do. I remembers now about Spanish and Mexican bull fights, an' shore decides to import one to Frying Pan Flat, California. The steer, he just pawed the dust up a instant, an' put his head down an' come for me. I run as fast as a buckaroo can run, and the steer come a chargin'. I made my way right toward the door of the little log cabin, the steer right behind. He wasn't ten feet from the door, an' I give the blanket a final wave right in front of him, an' dodged behind the cabin. Him a havin' his eyes shut, he just nacherally knocked the door right in as if he was a batterin' ram, an' I guess he just plowed through that cabin.

I made my way toward the clump of pines where my horse was, the steer a bellerin' somethin' frightful meanwhile. When I got to my horse, I looked around, and what met my eyes was shore a pleasin' sight to me. Tom Freeman come out of one window an' Jack Wilson out of the other. Sam Blaine back-tracked the steer an' come out of the door, an' Ernie Mason popped up through the wide chimbley. The big red candidate for the slaughter house bawled an' bawled inside of the cabin for a minute or two, an' then he backed out an' give chase to Tom an' Jack an' Sam, they all a havin' on red underclothes. Them three boys all hiked out in three different directions for trees, an' Ernie sat astride of the roof an' whooped an' hollered an' jawed an' laughed. Ernie has got a likin' for a joke when it ain't on himself. The fellows on the ground climb trees like scairt bobcats when dogs gets after 'em. The steer took up a position midway between the trees, an' pawed an' bellowed an' shook his head. Ernie, he began to get ready to get off the roof for a gun, I suppose.

“ ‘Now Alf,’ said I to him, ‘come on.’ ”

We rode down onto the flat from the pine thicket.

“ ‘Jake,’ says Tom Freeman, ‘the long lost is found. We hunters has been hunted up by the hunted. It’s a steer on us, Jake. Drive him away, an’ you an’ Alf come in an’ we’ll have breakfast.’ ”

ENTER LIZARD BILL.*

"There's some men that's bad by nature," said Wylackie Jake, "others is bad because it's easier to be bad than good. They's another class that's too bad to be bad, an' too good to be good, an' they's yet another class that's quiet and peaceable like, regular Mary's little lambs, that don't make no noise until it's time, an' then they let out a blat like a old ram. The first kind is easy to get along with, provided they doan't get down on you an' you let 'em alone. The second kind is good at heart, but uncom-
mon quick on the trigger when they's trouble in the wind. The third kind is always a lookin' fer trouble, an' generally findin' it. You cain't bank on what a feller of that kind'll do. Sometimes he's liable to be a grizzly bear, an' sometimes a sneakin' coyote. You kin always tell what the fourth kind'll do if you watch their eye. When you see a little twinkle, git ready for a Coroner's inquest. Now, what I'm a goin' to tell you about ain't got nothin' to do with the first two kinds uv men. But I'm a goin' to tell you about a fellow that thought he was bad an' a fellow that knowed he was when he had ought to be. It's just the old story over again: The loud-barkin' dog ain't the one that bites the hardest.

*This story is republished here through the kindness of the San Francisco *Argonaut*, in which weekly it was first printed in the issue of March 7, 1904.

"Now, ol' Charlie Porter thinks he's a whirwind of destruction. He thinks the sun rises an' sets on his badness. Of course fellers like me an' Ernie Mason an' Alf Redfield knows the ol' man ain't the hell on wheels he claims to be; but then we're copper-riveted residents of this here valley, an' knows his ways. To a tenderfoot or a casual acquaintance, ol' Charlie Porter is about the same as a rattlesnake. He ain't a man that kin be handled with lily-white hands. Every man has got his hobby. It's some men's hobby to ride all the buckin' broncos in the world. An' it's some men's hobby to cause a whisky drought. They's other men that ain't satisfied unless they're doin' a little rustlin' or sellin' liquor to Injuns or doin' somethin' that ain't actually on the square. Ol' Charlie Porter's hobby is that he's the wickedest swearer in Round Valley and vicinity.

"In a big town they ain't much call for a man to be much on roundin' up a string of cuss words an' then stampedin' 'em over the landscape. But out here, where they's mules an' buckin' broncos an' sheep an' stock, a man's got to swear or lose his self-respect. A stockman is always hot an' tired an' sweaty an' mad, an' he uses swearin' as one of the mediums of expressin' his feelings. Some men swear easy an' quiet like, an' don't give offense to nobody. There's ol' Mr. Doyle; he could swear before a parlor full of ladies an' not stampede a heifer. He's just natural in his cussin'. His powerful language is just like bubbles along the top of the stream of his conversation—sort of ornamental, but not servin' any useful purpose. Then there's Jack Wilson—he's

from Arizony—he just cusses for the sake of cussin', an' damn me if I doan't hate to see a man do that. Jack's swearin' doan't do any good. Ol' Charlie Porter kin braid a long bull whip of cuss words, an' wind up with a terrible buckskin lash of unhyphenated ginger expressions. When ol' Charlie gets to jawin' at stock he just nacherally brings gore. Some men can swear this way without givin' offense, but ol' Charlie gets so awful wicked at times that I doan't like to hear him.

"Ol' Charlie has got a sheep range over at the foot of Long Ridge, an' only comes to town now an' then. When he comes to town he transacts what business he has an' then proceeds to step up to the bar of the Dewey an' punish straight goods. After the liquor has had the required effect, ol' Charlie begins to boast about his cussin' ability, about how he's able to shoot out a string for five consecutive contiguous minutes without repeatin' himself. An' if they's a tenderfoot in the barroom, ol' Charlie, after he's had seven drinks, 'll challenge him to a cussin' match. Now, ol' Charlie is really about the most ugly man I ever seen, an' that's sayin' a good deal. When Nature made him I think she collected the ugliest man an' the ugliest woman that ever lived an' rolled 'em into ol' Charlie Porter. You take his ugliness, his reputation for makin' trouble an' his premier royal cussin', an' to a tenderfoot he's the Bad Man from Bitter Creek. So when he proposes a cussin' match most tenderfeet decides that they shore has to humor him, instead of pullin' his whiskers. To compare the strained, stilted, weak

little wheezes of cussin' expressions that a tenderfoot blows off, to the expressive, elevatin' bellows of ol' Charlie 'd be like comparin' a miserable little popgun of 22 caliber to a man-killin' 45 Colt. But ol' Charlie thinks it's lots of fun, an' keeps it a goin' until his eleventh drink, when he forgets about his hobby an' goes to sleep with his head on a cyard table.

"Onct or twict in his time ol' Charlie Porter has run into a feller that couldn't or wouldn't squeeze out the orneriest little word when called upon to do so. I wisht you could see ol' Charlie then. He jest rips around an' raves an' roars an' bellows an' beefs about it. When such a thing happens you'd think they was shore a round-up in the Dewey. Ol' Charlie has the habit of pullin' a gun on such a tenderfoot man an' makin' him repeat a few choice expressions for the good of his general constitution. They ain't nothin' like swearin' to round off a man's education, so ol' Charlie says.

"Now they never was a man that was so bad they wasn't somebody worse, an' they never was a man so skilled in any line that they ain't somebody better. All bad men runs into worse men, an' men that prides themselves on their swearin' always runs into somebody that makes their efforts look like a bluff again four aces. Ernie an' Alf an' me always 'lowed that ol' Charlie 'd run into a tenderfoot some day that'd turn out to be a rattlesnake instead of a garter snake, an' of course we 'lowed right. Such things is perfectly nacheral. Nobody's got a monopoly of all the badness in the world. It's too bad they

ain't, for then we could kill him an' drink our liquor in peace, Charlie Porter or no Charlie Porter.

"One day ol' Charlie Porter come into Covelo to buy some grub. As usual, he was a huntin' trouble, an' as usual he found it, but this time he found more'n usual, more than he could really handle. Ol' Charlie marched into the Dewey an' ordered drinks for all hands. We'd had seven drinks when in comes a quiet-lookin' feller with a steel-gray eye, an' tolerable well built. Him a bein' a stranger, everybody looks at him quiet like. He walked up to the bar an' says, 'What are you a goin' tew have, boys?' Now that was a doin' the right thing in a cow town. If he'd a corralled a drink all by himself an' a left the rest of the poor mavericks in the Dewey a lookin' on, he would a been put down as a stingy, measly lump of tenderfoot flesh. But him a doin' the right thing shore argued he'd been educated some in the right way. Now ol' Charlie Porter thinks he'll play smart, an' he goes up to him, an' says:

"I'm ol' Charlie Porter, the Bad Man from Long Ridge, an' I kin cuss louder an' longer than any man in Round Valley."

"'What you say is probably true,' says the tenderfoot.

"'Probably true!' bellers ol' Charlie. 'Probably true! Well, if this don't just beat hell an' bereft me of the power of speech. This is shore the strangest thing that's ever happened to me in my long an' eventful life. To think that I should ever've lived to see the day when my word should be doubted as to my swearin' ability by a longhorn. Well, I'm simply damned.'

"He took off his hat an' wiped his forehead with a bandanna.

"'Don't take on so, pardner,' said the tenderfoot. 'I didn't mean no offense.'

"This is where he made his mistake. If he'd a run a straight out-an'-out bluff on ol' Charlie from the beginnin', he'd a had him down an' out.

"'My tenderfoot friend,' says ol' Charlie, 'when you said that my claim was probably true, you suggested that they was shore a doubt in your mind about the truth of what I said, an' then you told me not to take on so. Now out here we don't allow tenderfeet to doubt our words, an' we don't take advice from dudes that don't know a Winchester from a Savage. To show you, my friend, that I'm what I claim to be, I'm a goin' to take on all I please, an' as for my a bein' the worst swearer aroun' here, you an' me'll prove that before this here intelligent multitude,' says he, a sweepin' his hand around the barroom.

"The tenderfoot didn't say nothin', but I seen a light in his eye that told me he wasn't a man a lookin' fer trouble, but bein' in it, he'd make the other fellow think he'd run into a combined yellow jacket, hornets' nest. He just looked at ol' Charlie as if he was the kind uv people he'd always done business with.

"Ol' Charlie waited for his awe-inspirin' bluffin' words to sink into the 'intelligent multitude,' an' then he says: 'You an' me 'll cuss this matter out before these here thirsty boys. I'll blaze away first, an' then you kin toot your infantile bazoo, an' the

boys here'll decide who wins. The loser'll have to stand for the crowd three times. I'll begin.'

"The tenderfoot looked on in a sort of a amused way.

"All bad men has to have the first word, an' that's why they gets proved to be somethin' other than poison oak. They always give the other fellow a chance to put in the last word, an' that's what counts, if it's a good one. If bad men 'd put in more time a thinkin' about the last word instead of the first one, the Coroner wouldn't have to set on so many bad men.

"Ol' Charlie began to saw the air an' paw, an' then he let loose the foundations of his great deep. If that flood had a been let loose just after Noah got his livestock rounded up, the Ark would a been shipwrecked, an' none of us would a been here to tell the tale. I'd heard ol' Charlie do some right smart cussin', but this here effort of his shore eclipsed all previous records. He stamped the strongest bands of cuss words I ever heard up to that time. He didn't repeat, an' he just stood there an' talked like he was mad at a lot of stubborn mutton. There was just one thing I didn't like about his effort. It was so wild an' unnatural an' wicked that it was awing. There seemed to be an atmosphere of religion pervadin' the room. Ol' Charlie just rolled along to the end. He wasn't like a mountain stream, turbid an' quiet, an' loud an' gurglin', an' wide an' narrow, an' a splashin' over boulders an' then a hidin' under ground, but more like a broad river in the springtime, all riled up an' knowin' where it's a goin'.

Finally the ol' man finished, an' a kind of peaceable calm come down on us. All of us was awestruck. Ol' Charlie had shore produced his masterpiece, an' he was proud of it. He up an' says to the tenderfoot, 'It's your move, pardner.' The tenderfoot he seemed kind of awed, an', being with strangers, wasn't a choo-chooing forward.

"Ol' Charlie he said, 'What have you got to say to that, my friend?'

"The tenderfoot he up and said, 'You go to hell.'

"At that ol' Charlie's neck just swelled up like it was a goin' to bust his collar, an' says he: 'Would you a mind a repeatin' what you said? Perhaps my ears didn't just round up them words of yourn proper.'

"'Anything to oblige you,' says the tenderfoot. 'I said for you to go to hell, an' I meant it.'

"At that ol' Charlie just pulled his gun an' covered that tenderfoot like a robber does a stage driver.

"'Now,' says the old gentleman, 'you will have to repeat every word I say before this here crowd. If you don't, I'll see about who goes to a warmer climate. Now, then, you repeat.' With that ol' Charlie got ready to start off. He had just turned the first word out of the corral when we heard a whoop outside, an' jawin' an' cussin', an' we all run out to see what the trouble was, includin' ol' Charlie an' his victim. We see it was Tom Freeman an' Sam Blaine an' Jack Wilson with a big bunch of steers from off Frank Bell's range. Them wild range steers hadn't never been to town before, an' they didn't know how to act, an' the first thing they did was to stampede. Well, sir, afore I knowed it,

that tenderfoot had run out of that saloon an' jumped onto my old pinto plug. That horse is nine years old, but he's from Modoc County, which is as wild a place as they make, an' he's never been rode without him a havin' a buckin' spell first. When that tenderfoot got aboard, the horse knowed it wasn't me, an' he shot up in the air all humped up like a steeple. But he didn't throw the rider. Then he jumped stiff-legged for a hundred feet, an' then turned quick several times, an' then he jumped into the air like he was a goin' to fly, but he had shore met his match, which he knowed. Then the fellow, he wasn't a tenderfoot, took after that stampeded bunch of steers an' whooped an' yelled, an' finally turned 'em back. Then we could make out what he was a sayin'. He jawed, an' raved, an' roared. He let loose combinations of cuss words that was shore new around here, an' what he said had meanin'. He seemed to draw on up above an' down below, on the earth an' under the earth, from the mountains an' from the trees, an' from the air, from men an' from stock. An' them cattle understood him as well as a mule would. Sheep! Why, sheep would a been plumb scared to death. In the face of that, ol' Charlie Porter's effort looked like a solid chunk of worm-eaten misery. The tenderfoot rode up in front of the Dewey, an' the fellers cheered him, all but ol' Charlie Porter.

" 'The drinks are on you, Charlie,' says Ernie Mason, which the same a bein' a sheepherder. Ol' Charlie he didn't say nothin', but walked over to a chair an' sat down an' looked at the floor. We all stalked in, an' the tenderfoot that wasn't a tender-

foot says: 'That's a likely horse. Who's his owner?' 'I am,' says I, proud like. 'Lucky man,' says he. 'An' now that you boys here has heard the ol' gentleman an' me disturb the religious-minded around here, it's up to you to decide who's a goin' to pay for three rounds of drinks.'

" 'Ol' Charlie Porter,' yells the crowd.

"Ol' Charlie, he got up an' said he guessed he'd be a goin' home, as he wanted to get to the top of the ridge by sundown. He started out, when the tenderfoot pulls a gun on him an' says: 'Now, you old white-headed bully, you just pungle up for the drinks for the crowd three times or I'll make you get down on your hands and knees an' ask my pardon.'

"There wasn't nothin' for the ol' man to do but treat, an' he done it, but with ill grace. When we all 'd put the three rounds of dark horse under our belts, ol' Charlie starts out, when the tenderfoot stops him an' says: 'It's due to you to know my name an' where I'm from. I ain't got no cards, but I'm Lafe Hadley, called Lizard Bill for short, an' I'm from near Tombstone, Arizony.'

"Ol' Charlie he didn't say nothin' for a instant, an' then he up an' says: 'I wisht I'd a knowed who you was when you first come in. I'd like to've introduced you to the Valley.' An' with that ol' Charlie went up to the tenderfoot that wasn't a shore enough one, an' put his hand on his shoulder an' steered him toward the bar, an' says: 'Generally I don't take but eleven drinks when I come to town, which the same I've stowed away to-day; but for onct I'll break my rule. You an' me 'll drink without the boys for this onct. What'll you have?'"

A PERSONALLY CONDUCTED ELOPE- MENT.

It was early morning. "Wylackie Jake" and I still lay on our bed of spruce boughs. The wilderness life of the day was beginning to awake, that of the night had disappeared to cave, and hollow tree, and brush patch. Almost directly over our bed, at the end of a long branch, was a huge pine cone. Just before every daybreak, during our sojourn at this camp, several bluejays were accustomed to get their breakfasts from this cone. All wanted to breakfast at the same time, irrespective of the fact that the size of the table would not permit. The result had been that Jake and I had been awakened every morning at an unearthly hour by the noisy chatter of the hungry. An open and notorious warfare had been waged every morning over this bluejay free lunch counter. On this particular morning the chattering was shriller than usual. After several moments of pecking and flirting of wings and chattering, one bird seemed to be victorious. The remainder gave up the struggle, and probably sought other cones.

"See what hoggishness 'll do," said Jake. "Now some of them birds 'll have to go hungry because that jay up there wanted to be the whole jay or none. They's only one good thing about hoggishness, an' that's this: When a man onct proves himself to be a

hog, you always knows what to expect. He just moves along in a straight line from little piggishness to the biggest specimen of the Poland China porcine. It's different with love. Love is a funny thing."

"How do you know? Have you ever been there?"

"No, I haven't never been in love, but I've been on this here lump of mud nigh onto thirty years, an' I've used my eyes an' ears an' thinker some, an' they all tells me that love is a mighty uncertain critter. You see a man in the splendor of his manhood, eyes good, hearin' first class, muscles ready to take him to the top of South Yallo Bally without him a havin' to stop an' rest, an' thinker a tickin' away proper like a old-fashioned silver watch. Meet this same man a couple of days later an' you only find a bleached carcass of a man. He cain't eat, he cain't sleep, an' as for workin', why, one of them half-breed Injuns from off the Reservation 'd make him look like a cow pony alongside of a race horse. An' what's caused the ruin of the man's constitution? Why, nothin' but love. Love has turned this fine, strong man into just a wabbly calf. Now they tells me that love is a pink-faced kid, but I think he's more like a big, strong buckaroo, an' when he gets one rope around a man's neck, another one around his waist a holdin' his hands fast to his sides, an' one around each leg, an' straddles the victim out, the victim ain't no longer got a mind of his own. He becomes as helpless as a long-legged colt away from its mother, an' they ain't no tellin' what he'll do any more than there's tellin' what a woman 'll do. The mind of such a man becomes disordered. He thinks

about doin' all kinds of impossible things to show his girl how much he loves her.

"I mind me of one case that goes to show what fools love 'll make of a man, a woman, an' them that didn't have no more sense 'n to mix up in the affair. It just goes to show the cussedness of love an' luck.

"They was a fellow come to Round Valley named LaFayette Hadley, called Lizard Bill, because he was scairt of lizards, an' because his name wasn't Bill. That's one of the peculiar things about names up here. We all calls Eel River that because they never was a eel seen in it. They's a cañon called Old Woman's Cañon, because they never was a old woman seen near it, an' never will be. An' this here mountain we're camped on is called Hammer Horn because nobody has ever hammered a horn on it. Bill was from Tombstone, Arizony, an' got the best of ol' Charlie Porter in a swearin' match the first day he ever was in Covelo. He was a quiet, steady, un-asoomin sort of a young fellow, a good bronco twister, a rattlin' first-rate buckaroo, an' a savin' of his yellow boys. Bill was also quick on the trigger when he had ought to be. He worked for ol' Cattle King Morrill—the same man I work for when I agitate for somebody except myself, which ain't but seldom.

"Mr. Morrill had a daughter named Anna, which the same had a college education an' other up-to-date fixin's, an' was as purty as one of them heroines in a paper-backed novel. Now you'd suppose that a girl whose father had cattle an' sheep on almost every hill in Trinity, Mendocino an' Humboldt, who was

better educated 'an anybody in the Valley, her a bein' able to read Latin an' Greek an' other languages that's got a tombstone over 'em, an' who was purty, 'd be as stuck up as a stage driver. But Anna wasn't that kind of a girl. She liked Frisco, an' had been to Paris an' heard the Frenchman polly you, but she said she preferred Round Valley to the gladsome delights of a metropolis.

"Anna liked to hunt, an' they wasn't no better fisherman around. Trout just nacherally seemed to like to get caught by her. I've seen 'em jump clear out of the water to grab one of her flies, an' none of 'em has ever done that much for me. An' sing! Why, that girl could charm a chipmunk out of a tree. When she was just a kid she could ride most any bronco on the ranch. An' nerve! Well, onct when she was out a campin' with her father over on Shell Mountain, she was alone in camp, an' a cinnamon bear come along, evidently thinkin' that because he didn't have no one but a girl to deal with he could pack away a side of bacon an' the syrup can. When the ol' man come back he found that it was a certainty that the fryin' pan 'd shore have bear meat in it for breakfast. So you kin see that Miss Anna Morrill 'd have the active support of every man that wore a shore enough Stetson an' could ride a bronco. None of our style of men that wouldn't a raised hell an' put a chunk under it for Miss Anna Morrill. That ain't a sayin' that we all was in love with her. Sometimes I think a man's liable to think more of a woman than the word love'll express. That was our fix.. None of us never thought there was

any hope for us, expectin' that some hard-hat dude man that never cussed, an' always went to church with his mother 'd shore round up the pride of the Valley. That wasn't the way it worked out, an' that's one of the mysteries of this here love game.

"After Bill had been around a while an' had made friends of everybody around but ol' Charlie Porter an' Frank Bell's outfit, I noticed a change in him real suddenly. He didn't seem to take no pride in his work; a measly bronco twisted him off. At night in the bunkhouse I'd hear him turn over real often. Onct when a lot of stock stampeded he didn't get very mad, an' I noticed that he forgot to swear at all. At the table he didn't eat enough to keep a hog cholera microbe from losin' weight. When spoken to he didn't have much to say, an' didn't seem to put what you said into his corral at all. Now I knowed them signs. Ever since I was a small boy I've had lots of chances to watch people, an' I've watched 'em with about the same degree of attention as a dog does a pine squirrel a settin' up on a limb about thirty feet up, a chatterin' an' friskin' away. Not that I'm curious about people, but what a man learns about 'em from watchin' 'em is apt to come in as handy as a gun in a barroom row. You cain't know too much about people. I don't go as much on what you learn from books about 'em as I do on what you kin learn about 'em yourself if you keep your lamps trimmed. I knew the meanin' of them signs around Bill as well as I know they's a perpetual spring wherever they's a alder grove a growin'. A man a actin' that a way ain't a actin' natural, an' when a man ain't a actin' natural, he's either sick or in love."



A PERSONALLY CONDUCTED ELOPEMENT 49

"Or in trouble," I ventured to suggest.

"No. You're wrong there. Every man from Teddy Roosevelt down is in trouble from the day of his birth to the day of his death; bein' in trouble is the natural condition of us all. I knowed Bill wasn't sick, an' so I guessed he must be in love, probably roped an' branded by it. As soon as I comes to this conclusion, I wonders who he's in love with. There ain't many girls in the Valley, an' so the guessin' chances as to who she was, was limited. I runs all the girls in the Valley through the corral an' into the cars, but wasn't able to make up my mind which one had put her brand on Bill. Once or twict I thought I had the right one roped, but it come over me that a sensible fellow like Bill 'd have better sense 'an to lose his appetite an' sleep over such as them. Finally I got all balled up on the proposition. I was like a fellow in the mountains that strikes a nice plain trail that apparently leads to some place worth goin' to, an' he follows it, an' follows it, an' finally comes to a meadow, a nice, purty one, an' then he cain't find what becomes of the trail. It just seems to come to a stop—no reason for it a havin' led there, an' shore no reason for it a havin' stopped there. Thinks I to myself, here shore is a mystery that Nick Carter 'd like to tackle an' solve. Bill's in love, all right, an' in love with a girl right here in this Valley, but which one, an' is she as gone on him as he is on her? Have you ever tried to find the combination to a puzzle like that? I've done some tall thinkin' an' observin' in my time when out a tryin' to round up a bunch of steers that's disappeared, but I never trailed

an' circled around half as hard at that as I did a lookin' for Bill's tracks of love.

"Bill kept a gettin' worse an' more of it, an' I kept a tryin' to find out the swishin' petticoats that had put Bill to the bad. Of course I found out who she was, as I knowed I would. There ain't no way of findin' out a thing except by keepin' at it, an' the way I found out was a perfectly natural way. I was the only one in the Valley that suspected what was the real trouble with Bill, an' Bill didn't suspect that anybody, even me, 'd tumble to what was a eatin' him. Consequence was that Bill wasn't on his guard the way a big buck with a tree on his head an' a inch of fat on his hams always is, a sniffin' an' a turnin' around.

"One mornin' me an' Bill was due to leave Morrill's ranch for the vicinity of Blocksburg, where we was a goin' to do some roundin' up. We cinched our saddles onto our horses, each stuck a Winchester in its scabbard an' a gun in his belt, an' then commenced packin' a couple of wild, rearin', plungin' mules. Miss Anna Morrill come out to the ranch house, probably havin' heard me a talkin' to the mules in the only lingo they savvy. When she come near, you bet I changed my style of conversation, an' talked to them wall-eyed, slab-sided imps of perdition like we all was a settin' in a parlor. We finally got the hitches slung, tied a water bucket on top of one pack, an' was ready. I swung into my saddle, an' Bill swung into his. 'S'long, Miss Morrill,' says I, a takin' off my hat, an' with that I whacked them two mules with my quirt an' started 'em for the road. I

looked back suddenly, an' dang me if Bill wasn't a throwin' a kiss to the daughter of ol' Cattle King Morrill, an' she was a throwin' one to him. That give the whole story away to me. I rode on almost dazed by the sudden light that struck me. I was as clost to bein' plumb loco then as ever in my life. I feared for Bill, an' I feared for the girl. Ol' man Morrill is as quick on the trigger as I am on the eat, an' he's got a deep bass voice when he gets mad that makes you think he's in a bear fight. Moreover, he thinks they never was such a girl in the world as his'n. Bill didn't have nothin', so far as I knowed, except prospects, an' two cain't live on them, although they always think they kin. Of course some day Anna 'd inherit all the ol' man's property; but that day looked to be as far off as the Sierra Nevada from here, him a bein' sixty an' able to stand as much as a fellow of thirty. Thinks I, no good can come of any such match as these two seem to be a hankerin' to enter into. So I smokes a cigarette an' tried to think up a way of stampedin' the ol' man in the right direction. Me an' the ol' man has always got along first rate. He says our ideas of mine and thine is about the same, an' that we both has ideas native to the soil of a cow country.

"Pretty soon Bill caught up with me. He looked kind of downcast, as if he was a sheep that'd broke away from the main band an' was a expectin' a cougar to gather him in. We rides side by side down the road toward Covelo, the mules a hikin' on ahead. We come to town, an' I says, 'Bill, let's have a final round afore we hits the high spots where the water's

good an' whisky ain't to be had.' Bill was agreeable, an' we had a couple of jolts an' went out in front of the Dewey. Ol' Mr. Doyle was a standin' there, an' he up an' says: 'Mornin', Jake an' Bill. Where air you bound for this time?' 'We're a goin' up clost to Blox,' says I, 'an' mighty glad to get a change of scene.' 'I think that's all right for you,' says the ol' man to me, 'but Bill don't seem to be very anxious to go. What's been the matter with you lately, Bill? You doan't act like yourself. You've been a actin' like a dang fool lately, or a man in love, an' they ain't no special difference.' 'Oh, dry up,' says Bill. 'I cain't,' says the ol' man, 'for I ain't no pool of water.' I looked at Bill, an' Bill was shore a blushin'. 'Well,' says I, 'let's straddle the broncos an' hike out for the home of the suckin' calf an' the hookin' mother.' We jumped into our saddles an' started the mules north.

"We rode along, me a singin' a cow song an' a thinkin' how glad I was to be on the way to the high land. There ain't no place like the wilderness to me. Bill wasn't a sayin' nothin', an' was a lookin' as glum as a lost dog. Finally I up an' says: 'Bill, that's a mighty bad an' foolish thing for you to do a makin' love to Anna Morrill. It ain't likely to be what you might call popular with the ol' man.' Bill he flared up like a rattlesnake when a man comes a near, an' says, 'Jake, I wisht you'd 'tend to your own business.' 'Well, Bill,' says I, 'I'm a goin' to, an' I'm only a speakin' because I don't want to 'tend your funeral. You're a goin' to get into trouble, Bill, if you don't let up, an' I wouldn't bet a dollar watch again' a pair of dogskin chaps on who'll win

if you run afoul of ol' man Morrill. More'n one man has tried monkey business with him, an' always the Coroner has brought in a verdict of justifiable homicide. Now, if I was in your place, I'd stop right where I was an' backtrack my steps.' 'No, Jake,' says he, 'you wouldn't. No man in love would.' 'Bill,' says I, 'I don't know nothin' at first hand about love, but I guess you're right. What are you an' Anna a goin' to do about this business?' 'We don't know,' says he. 'Nor do I,' says I. 'But if we was only over in Tehama County an' could lay the case before Cam. Johnson, the "Matchmaker of the Foothills," they ain't no doubt about him a knowin' what to do. He fixed up the matrimonial leanin's of Dutch Bill, an' Jim Raglan, an' Long John Jordan as nice as ol' Mr. Putnam, the blacksmith, sets a tire. Well, we ain't in Tehama, an' we're a goin' to the wilderness. Maybe when we get out there I'll be able for to think up some kind of a plan that'll enable you all to marry an' live happy ever after. You a bein' in love ain't got no sense, an' of course you won't be able to think of nothin' but the girl. When I think of a feasible plan, I'll say somethin', an' not until. Does that bear the O. K. brand?' 'Shore,' says Bill, an' with that we began to talk about a one-horse sky pilot that'd had a row with a horse doctor in Covelo.

"We rode on an' on, an' finally come to the mountains, an' then we rode on for a couple of days more, comin' into camp one evenin' just as Ike Wharton an' Alf Redfield an' Johnnie Gray was a goin' to have supper. They just said, 'Howdy, boys,' an'

then me an' Bill yanked our saddles off an' give the hitches a pull an' piled up blankets an' fryin' pans an' coffee pots an' grub on the ground. An' then we all knelt down to supper. Alf had killed a deer, an' the way I ate was a good deal like the way a prize fighter eats after his trainin' days are over. Bill he didn't eat enough to keep a snowbird from becomin' emaciated.

"We all started to work the next mornin', an' kept at it about a week. I was a thinkin' all the time about some way of helpin' Bill out of his trouble. I was sincere, for I liked Bill, an' didn't want no Coroner's inquest held over him. When I feels that way about a man, I'd go from hell to breakfast for him. I finally concludes that since ol' man Morrill is a quick an' suddent kind of a man, the thing for Anna an' Bill to do was to be a little mite suddenter an' quicker. They ain't nothin' like beatin' a man at his own game. Now I never was much on details about marriages. I only know you've got to get a permit, an' a Gospel sharp, an' a man an' woman willin', an' a couple of witnesses, to have a proper matrimonial alliance. That information is all right for what it is, but they's a lot of little details, like kissin' the bride, an' honeymoon trips an' all that, that I don't know anything about. Thinks I, the thing for them cooin' birds to do is to fly away some morning to Tehama, over to Cam. Johnson's, with me a actin' as guide an' grand master of ceremonies. I knowed that when we all onct got over to Johnson's, they'd be a weddin' done up right. I knowed that Cam. Johnson wouldn't make no mistakes. He'd never put wool in a sack

made to hold Murphies. I thinks out the whole scheme, a figurin' on what trail to take, how to throw the enemy off in case we was chased, an' how, when we got across the mountains, I'd take Bill an' Anna to Cam.'s house an' then I'd ride on to Red Bluff an' get a license, an' come back with it, an' then the Justice of the Peace at Lowrey's could perform the ceremony. They ain't nothin' like bein' ready for trouble when you hear it a sneakin' in the brush around camp. Me an' Bill worked together all the time, but I didn't say a thing to him about what I knowed was a tearin' at his mind. I don't generally talk about a thing until I've made up the whole scheme an' tied it up in a bundle, wound with pink ribbon, an' then I'm ready to speak volumes. A couple of days before we was ready to leave the mountains I goes out with Bill, as usual, an' I says to him, as nearly as I kin recollect :

“ ‘Bill, I suppose you ain’t lost none of your tender feelin’s for Miss Morrill?’

“ ‘No, Jake,’ says he. ‘You’re right. I never ought to a come on this trip. I ain’t been worth a whoop. Why, a three months’ calf is more’n I kin handle now.’

“ ‘Well, says I, ‘you are shore a goin’ to make yourself mighty unpopular with ol’ man Morrill. I don’t blame you for fallin’ in love with the girl, an’ I must say, Bill, to be truthful, that I don’t blame her for fallin’ in love with you. If I was ol’ man Morrill they’d be a weddin’ where six-shooters wasn’t part of the wearin’ apparel of the male guests. But facts is facts, an’ they are as stubborn as a mule when

they's a rattlesnake on the trail. I ain't ol' man Morrill any more than he's me. So the question is, What shall the young man an' the young woman do? I've thought the matter over some, an' shall now give you my opinion. I don't like to get personal, but how much are you worth, Bill?' 'Oh,' says Bill, a thinkin', 'nigh onto \$3,000.' 'That's better than I thought. Now, what you an' Anna has got to do is to let me boss this here job, an' I'll have you spliced so's it'll take a fat-faced Judge an' a courtroom of jabberin' lawyers to get you separated.' Bill's face lighted up, an' I could see he was glad I was a talkin' to him. A man in love has got to have somebody to lean on.

"'Now,' says I, 'you an' Anna an' me will take a little trip over to Tehama County when we get in from this round-up. An' when we come back you an' Mrs. LaFayette Hadley can make the trip by way of 'Frisco, while I go back by way of the trail. How does that idea jibe with your system?' 'I'll fix it up with Anna,' says Bill. So it was all arranged between me an' Bill.

"We all slowly drove the rounded-up stock towards the Valley, me a singin', 'Oh, ain't I glad to get out of the wilderness,' an' Bill a brightenin' up the closer we come to home. When we had put the beef victims of man's eatin' powers into the big field, I seen Bill ride off towards the house, an' I seen somebody flutter somethin' white at Miss Anna's window, an' I seen Bill take off his hat.

"The next day me an' Bill had to pack some grub over to a camp on Wylackie Hill, an' Bill told me

that him an' his financee was willin' to entrust their happiness into my hands. Bill said that his girl was for tellin' the old gentleman all about the affair, an' then holdin' the threat of an elopement over his head unless he'd consent to a weddin'. But Bill said he wasn't a goin' up against four aces with nothin' but a bob-tail flush, an' Anna saw the point an' caved in.

"So it was all arranged that me an' Bill should get five days off to go on a hunt. Miss Anna, the day we started, was to get on her horse like she was a goin' for a ride, an' then meet us up at the forks of Williams Creek. It takes about three days to go over the mountains to Lowrey's, near where Cam. Johnson lives, an' so we took along a camp outfit on a couple of mules. Bill an' I each took along a six-shooter an' a Winchester, an' ammunition enough to kill off all the unwillin' fathers in California. Me an' Bill started as arranged. We went east an' then skirted the hills to the north, an' then hoofed past Gray's, an' come to the forks, where we an' the sweatin' mules stopped. I felt somewhat uneasy. It's risky business a helpin' a millionaire's daughter run away to marry a buckaroo with only \$3,000 an' a Winchester an' a six-shooter an' prospects. Bill looked kind of pale around the gills, but he had that twinkle in the eye which shore shows determination. I got offen my pinto an' let him go a grazin'. Bill took his Winchester outen the scabbard an' stood by his bald-faced horse. After what seemed a long time I heard the hoof beats of a horse a comin' along the trail, an' on lookin' up saw Bill's girl a comin'. My, but she was purty! She had on a shore enough

Stetson, an' a gray habit, an' if she didn't have a rifle, too. She smiled an' says, 'LaFayette, what are you doing with the rifle out of the scabbard?' I up an' says, 'He just seen a big buck up there in the brush, an' tried to get a shot at him.' I didn't want Bill to have to say that he was ready to shoot her father if he had to. That wouldn't a done. Bill he walked up to where she was a settin' on her bay an' took one of her hands in his, an' she leant over an' kissed him. 'Here, now,' says I, 'no spoonin' while I'm in charge. When I get you all across the mountains before a Justice of the Peace or a Gospel sharp, you can spoon, but till then it's against the rules of El Capitán. We ain't on pleasure bent now. Straddle your horse, Bill. You an' Miss Morrill drive them two mistakes of nature forward. I'll ride away behind a actin' as a sort of rear guard.' We hiked up the trail this way for a couple of hours, when I come up on Anna an' Bill a talkin' to Ernie Mason. They were a tellin' him we were a goin' to Brown's camp for the day, but Ernie said we must have big appetites on a one-day's picnic, havin' to have two pack mules to carry the grub. Ernie had us there, but he's a good-natured chap, an' didn't press the point. If I'd a been with 'em when Ernie come along I'd a told a better story than Anna an' Bill did to Ernie; but they a bein' in love couldn't think of nothin' sensible. We rode on up the mountain, an' Ernie headed for Covelo.

"Now I was afraid Ernie 'd go to ol' man Morrill an' tell what he'd seen, an' so I shore decided to make all the crooks an' turns possible, an' to take ad-

vantage of every trail that was known only to me an' Alf Redfield. So we curved around considerable, an' when we got to Eel River we all rode up the river bed about a mile, an' then come out on some rocks at a secret trail made by me when I was a rustlin' for a livin'. We camped that night about half way up the ridge. The next mornin' early we hiked out, an' kept a goin'. Anna was a standin' the trip fine, an' was as gay as if she was a goin' to Paris. Bill he didn't seem to brighten up much.

"He says to me, 'When we get this affair over, Jake, then I'll feel easy.'

"I won't," says I. "You an' Anna can hike out for some other place, but I've got to go back to the Valley, for it's the only place I know. I'd be like a grand-daddy longlegs in a hot skillet any place else."

"We're a goin' to Arizona, Jake," says he, "an' we want you to go along. I'm well acquainted there, an' can show you to something worth while, if you'll go with us."

"No," says I, "I'd ruther not. I couldn't leave the old familiar places an' ol' Mr. Doyle an' Alf Redfield. Arizony's probably all right, but it ain't no place for me."

"Well," says he, "that's all right, Jake. Do as you like, but really I'd like to have you go." "No," says I, "I'd ruther not."

"We all kept a goin'. The middle of the second day we crossed the range an' got a sight of the Sacramento Valley. We kept our horses an' mules a goin' down the trail, a passin' through what looked

like quarries, then through forests an' past big moss-covered boulders. It was October, an' the leaves of the scrub oak was red, an' of the cottonwood, yellow; an' the horns of the deer was out of the velvet, an' the birds was all grown up an' strong on the wing. The sheep was all out of the mountains, an' most of the cattle. If we'd a been on a huntin' trip I'd a enjoyed it all, but we was probably a bein' hunted. I now felt a little like a deer must feel when he's a bein' chased. It was a mighty uncertain, ugly kind of a feelin'—a sort of a vague, far-off dread. I kept a lookin' at my six-shooter to see that it was ready for action in case of trouble, an' onct or twict I taken my Winchester out of the scabbard an' tried the lever. On the morning of the third day we all got down on level ground onct more, an' the mules an' horses give up their swingin' stride. I made up my mind we'd go straight to Cam. Johnson's house an' he'd shore tell us what action to take. I knowed he'd take to the chance like a collie does to sheep. Along about when the sun was a standin' right over us we all come up to Johnson's house. Cam. was to home, an' so was his third wife. He come out to see what the cavalcade all meant, an' his dogs, named Nero, an' Bryan, an' Sharkey, come a troopin' behind him.

“ ‘Why, hello, Jake,’ says he, ‘I’m glad to see you over on this side onct more.’

“ ‘Thanks,’ says I, a shakin’ hands with him. ‘Allow me to present Miss Anna Morrill an’ Lizard Bill Hadley, Mr. Johnson.’

Mr. Johnson he ’lowed he was glad to meet ’em, an' says for us to alight, which we done.

“‘Now, Mr. Johnson,’ says I, ‘these here young people is that foolish they want to get married in a hurry without papa’s consent. Weddin’s is something I don’t know much about, an’ I’ve brought ‘em over the mountains to you, a knowin’ how expert you are in such matters.’

“That flattery made him swell up an’ feel as good as if somebody had just give him a deed to some wheat land.

“‘Come in,’ says he, ‘an’ let me cogitate about the matter.’

“We went in, an’ Johnson introduced us to his wife, the same a bein’ a nice, young-lookin’ woman.

“Now have you got a license?” he asks.

“‘No,’ says I; ‘but I’m a goin’ to jump on that ol’ pinto of mine an’ ride to Red Bluff an’ back before dark, bringin’ the bucklin’ permit with me.’

“‘That’s good,’ says he; ‘an’ I’ll ride to Lowrey’s an’ get a Justice of the Peace. When we gets them ingredients an’ the fellow an’ the girl together, I guess they’ll be a weddin’, or my name ain’t Cam. Johnson, an’ I ain’t known as the “Matchmaker of the Foothills.” Myrtle,’ says he to his wife, ‘I wish you’d start right in now an’ get up a big dinner, so when Jake gets back an’ the weddin’ ‘s over we kin celebrate the arrival of any of the friends of these parties from over the range.’

“‘Well, I won’t lose no time,’ says I, an’ with that I went out an’ straddled my ol’ pinto onct more, an’ started for Red Bluff just a flyin’. The last thing I saw as I left Johnson’s was his wife a sickin’ Nero an’ Bryan an’ Sharkey after some chickens. I got to

Red Bluff at 3 P. M., an' got the license all right enough for LaFayette Hadley, of Covelo, aged 29, an' Miss Anna Morrill, of Covelo, aged 23. Then I jumped onto my horse an' started back for Johnson's. I was pretty tired, an' so was the horse; but when weddin's are concerned most people an' horses has a big energy reserve. Along about 5 o'clock I see the Lowrey stage just ahead of me, an' I decided to pass it. I come up close to it, an' who did I see a settin' on the front seat with the driver but ol' Bill Morrill. Now I've been excited some in my day, but on that occasion my heart jumped as if I'd been shot at by a tenderfoot I was a makin' dance. That part of Tehama is fenced, an' they wasn't no way of circlin' through the hills an' givin' the ol' man the slip. So I decides to ride boldly around the stage an' take the chances of the driver a beatin' me. I spurred up my pinto, an' the way we went around that vehicle was a good deal like the way a jackrabbit goes when a hound gets after him. I heard the ol' man holler:

“Wait a minute, Jake.”

“But I didn't wait. I had business elsewhere. Then I heard a whip crack like a repeatin' rifle, an' the wheels rattle, an' I just spurred an' kept a spur-rin'. Soon I looked back an' the stage was a quarter of a mile behind, a comin' to beat a choo-choo. The driver was a standin' up an' givin' it to the horses in a way that'd get him run in in a city by the Society of Bein' Cruel to Animals' man. My horse knowed they was somethin' important in the wind, an' he just lay back his ears an' run like a scairt coyote. In about a half hour I come in sight of Johnson's house.

As near as I could make out, the stage was about three miles behind. I give a whoop, an' Cam. come a runnin' out, an' then I waved the permit. In a minute I come a ridin' up, an' jumped off.

"'Have you got the Justice?' I asks, in a anxious tone.

"'I have,' says he.

"'Then have him toot his bazoo,' says I, 'an' quick, for ol' man Morrill's a comin', an' with a light in his eye that shore shows he's ready for to make business for the Coroner. Don't say nothin' to the contractin' parties about it.'

"'I won't,' says he. 'We'll have the weddin' right now, an' let the ol' man rave after it's all over.'

"We all went in.

"'Now, Mr. Allen,' says Johnson, 'dinner's ready, the license is here, an' you can pipe your valves an' make this couple one.'

"'Will you two stand up?' says the Justice to them.

"They stood up.

"'Now,' says he to Bill, 'do you take this woman for wife?'

"'I do,' says Bill, trembly like.

"'Do you take this man for husband?' says he to Anna.

"'I do,' says she, determined like.

"'Then I pronounce you man an' wife, an' may God have mercy on your souls,' says he.

"There was a rattle of wheels an' the crack of a whip. Bill give Anna a kiss, an' Mrs. Johnson did,

too. I grabbed holt of my six-shooter an' made ready for trouble. I felt somebody grip my hand tight, an' then whoever it was kissed me. I jerked away an' looked out of the door, an' ol' Mr. Morrill was a comin' down the walk. Bill an' Anna took up a position, a holdin' hands, in the middle of the room, an' the ol' man come a stalkin' in with angry mien.

"'What is the meanin' of this?' he asks, sober like.

"'Nobody said anything for a instant, an' then Anna she spoke up an' says:

"'It means, father, that Mr. Hadley an' I are married.'

"'Well, I'm simply damned,' said the ol' man, a takin' off his hat an' reachin' for his bandanna, an' me a grippin' my gun tight.

"'What did you want to run away for, when I've always been in hopes that you an' Mr. Hadley 'd make a go of it? Ernie Mason come in three days ago an' said he thought you was elopin, an' I come around Frisco way hopin' I'd be here on time to attend the weddin'. Here's a deed, Anna,' says her father, 'to half of my property, an' a big check, an' I appoint you foreman of the whole business, Mr. Hadley.'

"Anna threw her arms around her father's neck, an' Lizard Bill Hadley he come forward a lookin' kind of plagued, an' offered his paw, which the ol' gentleman shook in a glad way. An' so it was over, an' I felt like a man that's been kicked by a sheep. Such is the way of love. You never can tell what it'll cause people to do, nor how it'll affect 'em.

"Johnson now spoke up, an' says: 'Mr. Morrill, you wasn't in time for the weddin', but you are on time for dinner. My wife here, my third one, is a mighty good cook, an' I hope when you get done eatin' you won't feel that your trip over here was made for nothin'.'

"With that we all went in an' sat down."

"What did you get for your trouble, Jake?" I asked.

"Me? Oh, I got laughed at by the ol' man an' everybody in the Valley but Anna an' Bill. We three never laughed at one another. Let's get up an' have breakfast an' go a huntin'."

WHY WYLACKIE JAKE WENT TO TEHAMA.*

“No,” said Wylackie Jake, “I ain’t never traveled much. Some people travel around a lookin’ for health after they’ve lost it, like old Mr. Doyle, the President of the Round Valley Sportsmen’s Club, an’ others travels around to preserve it. The first breed of people do a whole lot of hikin’ around—’Frisco, Del Monticos an’ the like. The other kind hits the trail now an’ then out into the mountains when the lilies of the valley gets to pryin’ about what become of this cow or that hog. Whenever Sam Blaine, Frank Bell or Tom Freeman gets to searchin’ around for somethin’ they’ve lost, then Alf Redfield and me has to go to the mountains on a huntin’ trip. The more thorough they make the search, the farther Alf an’ I go and the longer we stay. They got so inquisitive onct that Alf and I had to go clear to Blocksburg, get a job a herdin’ baas an’ stay out all summer. But that time Alf and I ought to a had to do what we did. We had shore raised particular fits, and our summer around Blox was about enough to

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square the deal. Blox is a funny town. It's what old Mr. Doyle calls a 'rum old place.' Why, in that town a fist fight doan't attract as much attention as a dog fight. This Blox trip of oun was shore bad enough, but the worst travelin' I ever had to do arose out of a joke. Some people thinks bad actions 'll get you into more trouble than jokes; but my experience is that a good big joke on Round Valley 'll get a man into more genuine, sincere trouble than anything—except takin' a horse from some fellow that took him from some other fellow. The longest, orneriest trip I ever had to take up to date to preserve my health was over the range to Tehama County, an' it was all because of a harmless joke. I stayed over the range nigh on to a year, an' that shore shows how serious some people took the joke.

"One day I was a ridin' around lookin' for deer over by that big Rattlesnake Rock near where the road crosses Eel River. I looked up the road an' see a new rig a comin'. I knowed it was a new rig, because I didn't know the dog a runnin' ahead of it. Up here we always know who's a comin' on a road or a trail by the dog that runs ahead. This here dog was a spotted dog. I never saw the likes of him before, an' he seemed to want to drink the river dry. Pretty soon the rig comes up, an' damn me if the guy a drivin' didn't have on a stovepipe hat. Out here, you know, everybody but old Mr. Doyle wears soft hats, an' he bein' the hotel keeper an' undertaker an' President of the Sportsmen's Club, is allowed to satisfy his whim. When I see that hard hat I just nacherally wanted to rope that fellow an'

drag him across the river, but he was such a nice little dude-like man that I says, politely enough:

“‘Afternoon, pardner. Ain’t you out of your latitude?’

“‘Maybe out of my latitude,’ says he; ‘but if I’m on the Round Valley Road, I’m in my longitude.’

“‘Well, pardner,’ says I, ‘you’re on the road all right enough, an’ if you keep on a goin’ you’ll shore wind up in Round Valley; but if I was in your place I’d either get a other kind of headgear or else turn around an’ go back. The boys maybe ’ll stand for that spotted dog of yourn, but they’re mighty touchy on hats. They wants shorthorns to be peaceful and humble like, for they ain’t noteriety enough in the Valley to go ‘round’, and the buddin’ aspirations of tenderfoots shore has to be curbed.’

“‘I’m thankful to you for the suggestion,’ says he, ‘an’ shall now adopt your advice.’

“With that he opens a kind of a hat alfora an’ puts his stovepipe hat in it, an’ then from a valise he brings out a old soldier hat an’ puts it on his head.

“‘You now looks like a white man,’ says I, ‘an’ not like a dude.’

I looked at his rig an’ see he was some sort of a peddler.

“‘You’ve been good to me,’ says he, ‘a puttin’ me wise on the hat proposition, an’ now to show you I’m not without gratitude—which is the milk of human kindness—I’m a goin’ to give you my last bottle of a compound known as “High Life.” Rubbed into the hide of any aged animal it makes him young again; gives him the fire of youth, a steady step, a

keen eye. That pinto horse of yourn seems to be old, an' your dog ain't no longer young, an' this compound 'll restore them to their pristine vigor.'

"I didn't know what he meant by pristine vigor, but the rest of what he said was tolerably plain, an' I took the bottle an' thanked him.

"'Good day, pardner,' says he, a drivin' on.

"'S'long,' says I to him, an' with that I rode off, hopin' to get a buck. But deer wasn't plentiful, an' so I started for Covelo.

"I got there about three in the afternoon, an' stopped at the blacksmith shop to have a little chinnin' with Alf Redfield. Alf was a lettin' on to work at the blacksmith shop then. Alf has let on to work for almost everybody in town. Whenever he makes the entire round he'll have to move to some other town or take to rustlin' as a regular thing, or sellin' liquor to Injuns.

"Ol' Mr. Doyle was a havin' his buggy fixed at the shop. His horse was a standin' tied to a post near by. That horse was a likely horse before the woods was burnt, but of late years most all the Injuns over on the Reservation has had horses that puts on more looks an' speed. Ol' Mr. Doyle has got old along with the horse. The old man don't know he's old, an' he don't know the horse is old, either; but the horse does. Mr. Doyle was in the back of the shop a talkin' to ol' Mr. Putnam, the blacksmith, an' Alf was lettin' on to be busy with the buggy. I went over to the old horse an' began for to pet him an' talk nice to him, the way a fellow will talk to a old horse that knows how to behave.

Of a sudden I thinks of my present my hard-hat dude friend give me, an' I decided to try some of it on ol' Mr. Doyle's horse. I slyly poured some out into my hand an' rubbed it into the old horse's back. He didn't take on none, an' I decided the tenderfoot has shore passed off some counterfeit goods. Then I stands a minute or two a musin' on it, an' concludes that maybe horses is too big animals for the compound to work on, an' maybe it'd go better on a dog.

"Mr. Doyle has got a old dog named 'Bruno' over at his hotel which used to be a regular 'hell womper,' as he puts it. He says that ol' dog was a better hunter than a Injun when he was young. But the ol' dog ain't good for nothin' now except to lie on the sidewalk an' be petted. There's a young scrappin' dog named 'Bull' that gives the old fellow a lot of trouble an' makes him wish he was young again. I decided to try the compound on the old dog, an' went over to where he was a lyin' in the shade. I commenced to pet him, an' the old fellow enjoyed it shore enough. Then I rubbed some of the ointment onto him, an' it didn't have no effect. The old dog just wagged his tail an' panted kind of loud, the way a old dog will, an' when I quit rubbin' him lay down again. I had tried the dude's compound on a equine an' a canine, an' hadn't got no action. Thinks I to myself, a cat is a nervous high jumper, a sort of a ring-tail speiler that shows his bad health by his uncommon activity, an' maybe the feline 'll be affected where the equine an' the canine wasn't. So I recollect that old Mr. Doyle has a big cat named 'Robert Emmet,' which the same he

is uncommon fond of, an' which sleeps under the billiard table in the barroom of his hotel.

"So I ambles into the barroom an' pets the cat, an' pussy sagged in the middle an' purred when I touched him. The barkeeper, he went out to the well an' I rubbed some of the compound onto the cat, an' would you believe it, the cat just went back under the billiard table an' lay down an' went to snoozin' again. I had failed on the equine, the canine an' the feline. I was about to take the bottle to the back yard an' bust it with my gun, when I heard old Mr. Doyle's parrot say 'Polly, pretty Polly.' That puts a new idea into my head. Maybe the nerves of a bird was different from those of animals, an' perhaps the 'compound' would work on a bird where it didn't work on a animal. An' so I goes up to the polly an' says, 'Polly, pretty Polly,' an' the parrot just nacherally put her head out to have it scratched, an' the same I scratched, an' rubbed her on the back with 'High Life.' Would you believe it, that bird wasn't affected in the slightest. I puts it up that tenderfoot dude has shore played me for a sucker.

"I started for the back yard, intendin' to use my bottle as a target, for I do love to see glass fly when a bullet hits it, when suddenly I heard someone holler 'Whoa!' in a anxious tone of voice, an' then I heard a rattle of wheels. You bet I pulled my freight to the street mighty quick, an' just in time to see that ol' horse of ol' Mr. Doyle's rair up an' paw the air like a old grizzly that's been scratched by a bullet. Alf an ol' Mr. Putnam an ol' Mr. Doyle was a tryin' to quiet the horseflesh, but of a suddent

the old horse give a bound an' jumped ahead as if he'd run into a hornets' nest. All three of 'em hollered 'Whoa,' an' I run out and made believe I was a tryin' to head the old plug off. The boys come a pourin' out of the Dewey an' other places of refreshment. Well, sir, that old horse that hadn't been out of a trot for years an' years just seemed to recover his 'pristine vigor,' an' went down that highway like a dog with a tin can tied to his tail. Ol' Mr. Doyle looked at the cloud of dust, an' remarked, 'What in hell's struck the old fool?' An' Alf said he guessed the old horse had turned back to a colt. They wasn't nothin' down the road but a big cloud of dust. Tom Freeman—he's from Arizony—an' Sam Blaine jumped onto their horses an' took after that old colt, an' everybody began a discussin' what'd come over the old plug.

"I looked at the old dog, an' see that he was awake, an' that his eye had a light in it I hadn't seen in years. Bull was a lyin' across the street in the shade. Old Bruno got up an' stretched an' shook himself an' began to sniff the air. He seemed to have a air of conceit about him I hadn't seen since Bull licked him the first time. He started across the street, an' the bully dog began to growl. Bruno 'd been accustomed to always shearin' off when the other dog growled, but this time he just let out one savage snarl, an' showed his teeth, an' then he just clumb up onto that other dog like a bobcat does a tree. Now they never was anything in a cow town that attracted the same amount of attention as a dog fight. When the gamblers an' loafers heard them

welcome growls, fellows that hadn't budged when the horse ran away, just came a pourin' out of the saloons like bees out of a tree when a old bear is out for honey for dinner.

"And that was shore a dog fight. The bully dog was all swelled up and conceited like at first, as much as to say, 'Why, the idea.' Old Bruno had the sympathy of the crowd, which shore cheered him on. An', say—well, I've been in bear fights where there was considerable whoopin', an' hollerin', an' snarlin', an' growlin', and barkin', but this here fight shore beat anything in the way of a scrap I ever seen or heard. Them two dogs just clawed, an' chawed, an' bit, an' scratched, an' snarled. First one dog 'd be on top an' then t'other dog 'd be on top, an' sometimes they both appeared to be on top, an' sometimes they both appeared to be on the bottom. The bully dog put forth his best efforts at first, but Bruno kept a gettin' stronger as the fight progressed. When ol' Mr. Doyle see this he just whooped an' yelled 'Sick 'em, Bruno. Grab him. Catch him. Whoop ee!' After a while the bully dog got enough, an' quit scrappin', an' then Alf Redfield an' Ike Wharton separated 'em, an' the bully dog went down the street with his tail atween his legs, an' ol' Bruno a havin' to be held back. Ol' Mr. Doyle was plumb tickled to death. He just petted ol' Bruno so hard it sounded as though he was a beltin' him. Bruno he rubbed up against the old man's leg an' wagged his tail like somebody was a goin' to give him a hunk of meat. The loafers an' gamblers went back to their loafin' an' gamblin', an' life in Covelo resooms its natural condition.

"Thinks I to myself, I'd better be a makin' myself scarce around here. If that cat an' parrot get took in that barroom the way that horse an' dog has been took they ain't no tellin' just what'll happen. I started for my old pinto, when I heard a yowl that made me think a bobcat 'd come to town a lookin' for fodder. An' almost at the same time I heard Polly shriek, 'Damn it, give me a cracker!' What now happens I wasn't prepared for. Ever since the parrot had been in the barroom Robert Emmet had been a lookin' for parrot meat some day, but never had the nerve to tackle the bird, she pecked so savage. But now this here compound shore gingered up that cat so's he's ready for to tackle a eagle. An' the parrot, she feels fine, an' is ready for any cat the size of a screechin' panther. The parrot she just nacherally took up a position on a shelf behind the bar, loaded with whisky bottles and jimmyjohns, an' the cat jumped up on the bar. The barkeeper, which the same bein' a Dutchy, ain't got no nerve, an' didn't try to stop the scrap. Robert Emmet give a jump at the polly, and the polly pecked real hard at him an' flopped her wings, an' whisky bottles an' jimmyjohns fell off'en that shelf an' busted on the floor. You never saw so much good whisky go to waste in so short a time. Old Mr. Doyle come in an' looks at the wreckage an' debree, an' says he, 'This here is a gettin' damn serious,' an' with that pussy give another spring at Polly, an' Polly hollers, 'Oh, give us a rest,' an' knocks the feline an' more whisky bottles onto the floor. 'Stop them,' says ol' Mr. Doyle. An' with that Alf Redfield run in an' got

between the cat an' the polly, an' knocked Robert Emmet away when he was all crouched ready for another spring. Polly flew over on the bar an' flopped her wings an' bent over an' then she just flew right out through the door an' lit in a oak tree, an' screeched an' hollered like a wild Injun. Ol' Mr. Doyle, he just said, 'Well, what in hell?' The cat he now calmed down.

"The boys began a discussin' the cause of all the animal animation. I didn't say nothin', nor offer no theerries, but by an' by a little kid pipes up an' says, 'I seen Wylackie Jake a rubbin' somethin' on the horse an' dog.' 'Kid,' says I, 'you will please to recollect that small boys ain't to talk when they's men around.' With that somethin' caught my eye over at the door, an' it wasn't on Mr. Doyle's head. What did I see but that dude, a lookin' in, an' worst of all, he shore had that hard hat on. Well, sir, afore I knowed it, I pulled my gun an' just nacherally ruined that hat, a puttin' five holes through it, an' savin' one for emergency; but they weren't no emergency in that tenderfoot. He was just scairt stiff. He was the scairtest man I ever seen. I just nacherally ruined that silk, worm-eaten catastrophe of a dude hat. The little kid he pipes up again, the little kid does, an' says, 'Jake made that horse an' dog act up.'

"'What the lad says is true,' says the dude, 'if Jake is the fellow that ruined my hat. This morning I give a fellow that looks like that man there,' says he, a pointin' at me, 'a bottle of what they calls "High Life," or "dope," down at the city, for some advice he give me about not wearin' a silk hat in the Valley,

an' now he's ruined the hat, the only fellow in the Valley that'd do such a thing, as I've found out. Step up to the bar, gentlemen,' says he, 'an' have a drink with me.' Ol' Mr. Doyle he went behind the bar a laughin', and says, 'What's yourn?'

"Everybody was good natured an' willin' to drink with the shorthorn, an' things was shore a stampedin' my way, until Jack Wilson says, 'I'll take whisky.' Then he says, suddenly, as if he'd been hit by a rattle bug, 'Damn if the whisky ain't all on the floor. The joke ain't so funny now.' Ol' Mr. Doyle he just broke off a smile right in half an' roared, 'The skunk that'd do a thing like this ought to be run out of the Valley,' an' Jack he chimed in an' said the same, an' the rest of the crowd looked as solemn as a Injun funeral.

"I makes my way toward my old pinto plug, an' ol' Mr. Doyle bellowed, 'Stop him!' With that I run to my horse an' jumped into the saddle an' starts to ride off.

"Don't let him get away, boys. Remember the whisky,' says the old gentleman. At that Jack Wilson an' Ernie Mason an' some more lilies of the Valley jumped onto their horses, an' shore started for me just a flyin'. They a bein' on young horses, I knowed it wouldn't be long before they'd catch up with me, an' I didn't know what they'd do to me. Suddenly I bethought me of my compound, an' the same I takes out an' rubbed some on my old pinto. Ernie and Jack was a gainin' on me, an' I was a beginnin' to think I'd have to pull my gun an' keep 'em off. But in a few minutes I see that my old

pinto plug was a leavin' 'em behind. By the time I had got to Gray's I seen I was out of danger, an' my horse was a gettin' stronger at each jump. That compound just nacherally made my horse young again. I made my way over Leach Lake Mountain down to Eel River an' over the range to Tehama County, where I stayed there a year afore I dared venture back."

THE EXIT OF A TENDERFOOT.

“Whenever you get in a place where you ain’t on speakin’ terms with anybody,” said Wylackie Jake, “climb up on some peak an’ get your bearin’s before you try to be a good fellow. A man that tries to be smart an’ a good fellow before he knows the ways of people generally gets took down. A good fellow is generally a fool at best, but when he tries to break into the band without doin’ any perlimentary pawin’ an’ bellerin’, he shows himself to be completely lackin’ in gumption. The big longhorns of the band come around an’ look at him, an’ hook him, an’ the little calves let out a lot of insultin’ blats, an’ the cows hike over to the shade of the cottonwoods an’ lie down.

“I mind me of one case,” continued Jake, “of how a young tenderfoot come to Covelo an’ thought he was a goin’ to prove himself to be hell personified. He was a college man, an’ come up here one vacation a sellin’ books. Now, we all ’ll stand for shorthorns if they acts like shorthorns; but fellers like me an’ Alf Redfield an’ Lizard Bill Hadley ain’t a goin’ to stand for some college dude with a head of hair like a Angora goat that tries to act as we do. We all ain’t what you might call exclusive, but we ain’t a standin’ for toadstools a growin’ in our midst. When a shorthorn comes to Round Valley he don’t want to

do as we Round Valley boys do. He wants to do as we all expects him to do. If this here college calf that didn't have nothin' but little sproutin' horns hadn't a stuck his bill into our affairs an' tried to act in a sort of a patronizin' way, it's just possible he would a sold some books, instead of gettin' run out of the Valley, like he was a sheep-killin' dog.

"The college chap was in Covelo on the Fourth of July—a bad time for a dude to be around that didn't know he had ought to follow, instead of tryin' to be a bell wether. They had a big barbecue that day. All of the six hundred Injuns on the Reservation come to town to take part in the pow-wow, an' shore made a fine sight. An' all of the buckaroos from Morrill's an' Bell's ranches was there to take part in the rope-throwin' an' ridin' of buckin' broncos an' packin' of mules. There was grub for every Injun from Yellow Jacket down to ol' Wash-hopper, an' for every buckaroo from Alf Redfield down to ol' Charlie Porter, an' conversation water bubbled in the barrooms like a perpetual spring, an' everybody was a feelin' as fine an' dandy as a girl at her first hoedown. They wasn't nothin' in the whole outfit that looked as if it had got lost, exceptin' that college dude. He seemed to be everywhere, an' had the idea corraled that he was a makin' himself agreeable, when, as a matter of fact, he was a layin' the foundation for lots of trouble. He'd come into the barrooms an' put his hands on our shoulders an' try an' say smart things, an' finally wound up by askin' to be let into a game that me an' Tom Freeman an' Ernie Mason an' Jack Wilson was a playin'. We

frowned down on him like a lot of sheep dogs do on some little yelpin' ki-yi. But he didn't seem able to round up no actions proper, like a little dog would, an' so we let him in, an' he tried to talk big, but we all whip-sawed him good an' plenty, an' left him as high an' dry as the big hook does a salmon pool if it's shot proper. We all felt that his actions was due to ignorance, an' would have excused him if he hadn't a made an all-around copper-plated fool of himself at the ball given that night at ol' Mr. Doyle's hotel.

"We was to dance in the dining room. Me an' Alf Redfield an' Lizard Bill Hadley went to the dance. We wasn't dressed fit to kill, but we was togged out so we was satisfied with ourselves an' with each other. Along about nine o'clock there was some sort of a commotion at the door, an' when I see what come in I almost went plumb loco. That dude shore had more nerve than brains. What do you think of a measly tenderfoot that would come to a ball in a cow town in a claw-hammer coat, a shirt bosom as white as the snow over there on South Yallo Bally, an' a shirt stud a shinin' like the lantern on a choo-choo? Well, I guess me an' Alf Redfield an' the rest of the Round Valley boys felt poorer than skimmed whisky when we put our blue flannel shirts an' silk handkerchiefs an' dogskin chaps up alongside of that outfit. It seemed to me that there was a low buzz from the men all over that room, like the buzz of a rattler before he gets riled up much. But the girls, of course, had to see the thing in a different way. Any unusual happenin' or thing puts

a man on his guard, while it makes a woman fall in love. Me an' Alf and Lizard Bill an' some of the other boys was shoved off in a corner by this shorthorn. Did you ever see a big long train of cattle cars full of anxious-lookin' steers a lookin' out at the green fields, lined up on a side track, with the choo-choo a givin' out a few little death rattles, while some train with the President of the road aboard cuts past like a comet? That's the way we all looked an' felt.

"The girls all just beamed on that shorthorn like he was a long-expected husband that had come in. An' that shorthorn was knowin' enough to see that he had us all in the corral a lookin' through the rails, while he cracked his whip an' the girls done his biddin'. Now I shore decides that this ain't ever a goin' to do, an' so I sets down an' begins a thinkin' of some way to put that college dude out of the way. After I figures on it for a few minutes I gets Alf Redfield an' Lizard Bill Hadley an' Ike Wharton an' Jim Randolph an' Johnnie Gray to go outside with me, an' I laid down my plans to 'em. I told the boys that this here tenderfoot's success was a goin' to set up a rule that others 'd try to follow, an' that we had ought to nip his buddin' tender aspirations like the frost does a persimmon. The boys all 'lowed that this was so, an' Alf he up an' says, 'What's your scheme, Jake?' I up an' says, 'Well, ol' Tom Kai, the Injun medicine man, has a been predictin' that they'll shore be a Injun rair-up in these parts soon, an' I don't see no objectin' to it a happenin' right here an' now.' The boys all 'lowed that was so, an'

I says, 'Well, let's us be the Injuns an' make a raid on that dance hall.' 'That's a bully scheme,' says Alf, an' the rest of the outfit agreed. 'Then,' says I, 'if you all agree to it, let's go an' get some feather dusters an' lampblack over here at Joe Harper's store, an' Joe 'll shore let us have some blankets to wrap up in, an' then we'll go into that dance hall an' bust up the hoedown.'

"We all started for Joe's store, an' as we went past the dance I looked in at the window, an' that shorthorn was a leadin' a Virginia reel with my girl, an' she was a smilin' at him an' a lookin' happier than she ever did when I was with her. That made me about as snarlin' mad as a wildcat when he puts his foot into a trap. We all went to the store an' told Joe the scheme, an' he took to it like a Injun does to whisky. He brought out the dusters an' the lampblack, an' told us to help ourselves to anything we wanted, as he thought that this here white man's country was a bein' put to the bad by a lot of short-horns that didn't know a dove from a quail, an' he hoped we'd make this a lesson so that them that bore the tenderfoot brand could read it. That was a mighty fierce-lookin' band of Injuns. We rubbed lard onto our faces, an' then followed that up with lampblack. Of course Injuns ain't just what you would call black, but we 'lowed that everybody in the ballroom 'd be so scairt they wouldn't have time to think about that. Then we all fixed the feather dusters so's they looked like Injun topknots, wrapped some red blankets around ourselves, an' was ready for the opry to begin. We all sneaked out of Joe's

store an' went up clost to the dance hall. I told the boys to do exactly as I done, an' they shore agreed to. They had the idea that I knowed what I was about, an' trusted me. When we got to the door I pulled my gun an' let drive a couple of times, an' give a blood-curdlin' yell we all use when we're a tryin' to scare some sense into sheep. All of the Injuns done the same, an' then I run again the door, an' it flew open with a bang, an' me an' Alf an' all of the rest hiked in. They was a dancin' a Virginia reel, an' ol' Mr. Doyle an' the tenderfoot seemed to be the bell wethers. I give a terrible screech, an' Alf an' the rest blowed off yowls that sounded like a dozen red-eyed cougars had struck the place, an' then I commenced to dance a Injun dance, a gruntin' an' a singin' in the Pomo lingo. Everybody in the room tumbled to who we was, I guess, but some of the girls an' that tenderfoot. I took a shot at one of the lamp chimbleys, an' Alf blazed into the floor, an' Tom Freeman fell over like he was shot, an' then Ernie Mason an' some more bluffed that they was a comin' forward as a rescue party, an' then Johnnie Gray fell over. I edged toward that tenderfoot. The rest of the Injuns went for Tom Freeman to get his scalp, an' fought with Ernie an' the rest. When I got clost up to that shorthorn I let out a roar that must have sounded like the yowl of a bobcat, the screech of a cougar an' the bellow of a mad bull, an' I guess that tenderfoot thought he'd run up agin' ol' Geronimo an' the Kid an' Sittin' Bull an' Yellow Jacket an' old Tom Kai all rolled into one. Alf Redfield come to help me, an' we hustled the life of the

reel toward a corner, a makin' most frightful faces, an' a hollerin' like we was a roundin' up hogs. The tenderfoot wasn't a goin' very fast, an' was a little game. If he hadn't a been so fly as to dance with my girl, the chances are I would a quit; but when I thinks of that I resolves to do my damnedest, an' make this a example to high-flyin' tenderfoot buzzards. So me an' Alf kept a forcin' him toward the corner, an' finally when I pointed my gun at him he turned an' run, an' then Alf grabbed him, an' I come up clost an' seized holt of the claws on that coat an' cut 'em off, an' then hollered to Alf in Injun to let go, an' Alf did, an' then the shorthorn broke through the door an' shore stampeded for the tall timber, an' we all after him like we was a goin' to scalp him. I heard ol' Mr. Doyle say, 'Don't get scared, ladies, it's only Wylackie Jake an' the rest of them rascallions.' That tenderfoot shore must a been a athlete, for he run like a antelope. We all come a runnin' after him, a yellin' an' howlin' an' shootin', but we couldn't never catch up with him. A man would a had to straddle a flash of chain lightnin' an' a quirted it an' a spurred it till the blood run, an' then I doubt whether he could a ketched up with that dude. We run in his direction for quite a piece, a keepin' up the Injun racket, an' then I bust out with a big loud laugh in United States, an' the other boys done the same, an' we built a bonfire an' held a pow-wow right there.

"Since then we ain't been troubled up here with fresh boys that don't know a pine tree from a fir tree. When a tenderfoot comes here now he be-

haves in the way he's expected to, for he hears about what happened to that college dude at every stop the stage makes—Calpella, Traveller's Home, Long's, an' Eden Valley—an' shore decides that he won't be Jimmy Fresh when he gets to where the Round Valley Boys live an' work an' play."

DOYLE, J. P.

SIDELIGHTS ON THE CAPERS OF THE LAW IN COVELO.

Wylackie Jake and I were taking turns in "toting" a deer to camp. The slaughtered quarry was large and heavy, and made a troublesome burden. We came to a spring, and Jake, who was carrying the future "frys," laid him down, set his gun against a rock, got down on his hands and knees, and bent over and drank. I also took a drink. Jake rolled a cigarette, then sat down on a charred log and looked at the deer. I said nothing, for I knew that Jake's actions were the prelude to a reminiscence.

"A big deer," said Jake, "is a bothersome load to pack. A hunter always wants to kill a buck, an' after he kills him an' thinks of gettin' him into camp, he wishes he'd let the animal with a tree on his head continue to loaf around salt licks an' brush patches. They's only one thing I know of that's more troublesome 'an. packin' a deer to camp, an' that's a gettin' into trouble so genuinely that law has to be called to get you into it deeper. 'Pears as though when trouble comes after a man red-eyed, law had ought to step out from behind the brush an' stop it in its stampedin' career. But instead of that, law shoves a man out into the lake of trouble until he gets in over

his head. I ain't never been in trouble that deep but onct, an' that time I touched bottom three times, an' felt that somethin' had a mighty tight grip on my throat. I recollect that I give up all hope of a rescue party. When I come to they was a bailin' the law out of me. An' it was all over a dog.

"It's strange what people that ain't got no sympathy with sufferin' humanity 'll do for a dog. Now I ain't a man to look down on canines. They shore has their part to play in this world, as sheep, an' cougars, an' stock, an' purrin' pussies well knows. The fault don't lie with the dogs, but with their owners. A dog is just a dog—if you let him alone. Treat a dog like he was a dog an' he'll do anything for you that a canine can; but treat him like he was a human bein', you ain't no longer got a dog, an' you shore ain't got no human bein'. Dogs knows their place until human bein's makes 'em forget it. 'Stead of havin' a society for the preventin' of knockin' the daylights out of lop-eared mules, an' balky burros, an' rearin' horses, they ought to be a aggregation for the preventin' of half-way humans a makin' fools of animals. Now they ain't no finer sight than a shepherd dog a watchin' sheep, an' they ain't nothin' nobler 'an a good hound. An' they shore ain't no more disgustin' sight than to see a person treat some little pug dog like it was a infant. The dog don't enjoy it.

"Onct I was out on Leach Lake Mountain, at Brown's Camp, a herdin' a bunch of ol' Bill Morrill's sheep. Jack Johnson was my pardner. Jack done time in San Quentin onct for bein' mixed up in the

Payne murder. He wasn't good to look at, but he was shore a good herder. He knowed sheep an' their ways, an' sheep knowed that he did. Jack had a dog named Andy, which the same was a uncommon sort of a canine, knowin' more about how to handle mutton, when let alone, an' me. When the dog was with me he always done first class, an' acted like a dog; but when he'd get with his master he wasn't the same. Then he acted like he was half natural, an' half like he was a tryin' to be some new kind of a species, he didn't know just what.

"I've lived on the frontier most of my life. I ain't civilized like a city man that wears a silk hat an' one glass instead of a pair of specs. But I ain't a Digger Injun. I like things fair to middlin', an' I shave at least onct a week. I like to be half-way decent about my eatin'. Now, it was this desire of mine to be some polite, mixed up with Andy an' his master that led me into Ol' Man Trouble's corral. Jack Johnson never was civilized, an' never could be. It wasn't in his make-up. He lived as a squaw man before he was sent up, an' when he come back I seen that Gatlin' gun towers an' Winchester rifles a frownin' down on the prison yard hadn't turned him into a lily of the valley. Jack 'd let Andy eat out of the fryin' pan. Now I suppose I'm some fastidious, as you'd say, but I cain't eat with a dog. Jack could. I told Jack that I wisht he'd learn his dog better habits, an' Jack said if I didn't like his manners I needn't eat with him an' his dog. Now I don't like to be rowin' with my herder pardner, but ruther 'an stand for a half human, half dog animal a lickin' his



chops over what I'm a goin' to eat, I'll do most anything. So I up and told Jack that if he didn't teach his dog new table manners I'd send him to the place where dogs don't have to eat. Jack said that his dog was a dog of the old school, an' that it wasn't possible to learn his dog new manners. The canine was a hangin' around camp then, an' he marched up to the fryin' pan, which Jack had just took off the fire, an' grabbed a slice of nice venison rolled in flour, an' commenced to eat it.

"'What are you a goin' to do about it?' asks Jack.

"An' I up an' says, 'I'm a goin' to kill him. He's a good sheep dog, but his style of etiquette ain't in harmony with my sentiments, an' I'm a goin' to give you a chance to make some sausage meat.'

"With that I pulled my gun, an' ol' Jack he jumps up an' runs for his Winchester, a sayin', 'If you kill my dog, I'll kill you.'

"Now ol' Jack was that desperate that he wouldn't a scrupled at killin' anybody if he felt like it, an' so I turns the gun on him, an' hollers at him, 'If you touch that gun I'll shoot.'

"Ol' Jack he stopped an' faced me. He wasn't five feet from his gun. I didn't want to have to kill him, even though the world would a been a lot better off without him, unless I had to, but there I was a coverin' him to keep him away from his rifle, an' if I let up for a instant he'd get it an' kill me. We just stood there a lookin' at each other, an' the dog just nacherally a eatin' up all they was in the pan. How long I held

that gun on that old ruffian I don't know, an' ain't got no idea, but it seemed to me like a month made up of the longest days in the year. At last I heard hoof beats, an' so did ol' Jack. I just kept the gun on him, for he was a unforgivin' old cuss. Then I heard Tom Freeman's and Ernie Mason's blabbers a goin', an' then Tom yelled, 'God's sake, don't kill him, Jake.'

"I never turned around, but I says, 'I will if he tries to get that gun.'

"Ernie he rode in between us, an' Tom he went an' grabbed the ol' man's gun. Ernie he made me give up my gun. Then old Jack, he said, 'I'm a goin' to take the law to Jake for tryin' to murder me. He was a goin' to shoot me for doubtin' his word just as you all come up, an' I was a tryin' to get my rifle to defend myself. My word's as good as Jake's any day, an' I'm always ready to defend my opinions,' says the old liar.

"I just up an' says: 'Well, gentlemen, I'm ready to go where you say. I ain't afraid of ol' Jack nor law neither, when I'm on one side an' them two is on the other. The only thing that's a botherin' me is this bunch of sheep. What's a goin' to happen to them if we all go to Covelo?' Ol' Jack he up an' said that they wasn't no need of him a goin' yet, an' that Tom an' Ernie could take me to Covelo an' then have somebody sent out to take my place and his'n, an' he'd come to town an' help persecute the case. I didn't want to go, but when a man's got to do a thing, he had ought to do it without makin' monkey faces. So I told 'em that I was ready to go, an' that

they couldn't start any too quick to suit me, nuther. So after dinner me an' Tom an' Ernie started for Covelo. Tom rode ahead a packin' a Winchester, then I come, an' Ernie brought up the rear, with a gun in his belt. Now they ain't no fun in bein' on the trail under such conditions. They let ol' Jack keep his gun, which wasn't fair, an' I was afraid the old ex-con 'd bushwhack me, an', besides, Ernie an' Tom an' me never was good friends.

"But nothin' stirrin' happened, an' late that evenin' we all rode into Covelo, an' I was shet up in the one-horse calaboose. I was somewhat riled up. If you've ever seen a rattlesnake all coiled up, with his tongue a runnin' in an' out, his eyes a emittin' sparks, an' his old rattles a buzzin' away like a caucus of locusts, you've got some idea of how sincerely mad I really was. Alf Redfield, my old pardner, happened to be in town, an' heard about me a bein' shut off from fresh air an' the bleating of sheep, an' he come to see me. Alf said he was glad to see me, but that he didn't like the place I chose to hole up in. He said as far as he could see I had to have bars over my windows to keep my friends from breakin' in. Alf always did like to joke.

"I says, 'Alf, this ain't no spasm of laughter I'm mixed up in now. Ol' Jack 'll tell any kind of a lie, an' the chances is he'll have some more like himself on deck to swear me to the big free boardin' house kept by the State for the unluckies.'

"'Don't worry, Jake,' says he. 'I'll do what I can for you, an' you kin rest assured that it'll be somethin' more than usual. Ol' Jack Johnson is a

pretty ugly old customer, but he'll find out before he gets done with us that he ain't got the world by the tail.' I give Alf my hand, an' he give me his, an' with that he went out without sayin' another word.

"Two days after that a feller come an' got me an' took me over before ol' Mr. Doyle, the Justice of the Peace. The feller said that he was a Constable, an' he looked like he was a fool of some breed or other, havin' two six-shooters in his belt an' a Bowie knife in his boot. The Constable an' the Judge had just been elected, an' they didn't know no more about law than a Injun full of whisky. Ol' Jack Johnson come into court with his gun a hangin' in his belt. Pretty soon I heard a uproar in the street, loud talkin' an' a noise like they's a lot of people comin', an' in a instant in come Alf Redfield, an' Ike Wharton, an' Lizard Bill Hadley, an' Johnnie Gray, an' about eight other fellows. Every one of 'em had on a shore enough Stetson, an' a gun a hangin' in his belt.

"After a long time ol' Mr. Doyle, the Justice of the Peace, come in a wearin' of his plug hat, an' then Tom Freeman an' Ernie Mason come a gallivantin' in. Ol' Mr. Doyle he took off his hat an' polished it with his sleeve, sat down, cleared his throat, an' looked over the courtroom. Then he up an' says, 'Air you ready in the case of Frank Perry, alias Wylackie Jake, charged with assault to commit homicide?'

"I up an' blurted out that the funeral procession could start at onct.

"Then the ol' gentleman he up an' said, 'I ain't up much on law, havin' just been selected, but Jack

Johnson here, the persecutin' witness, has seen some law,' says he, a laughin', 'an' knows the ways of metropolitan courts like Wylackie Jake knows the ways of stock, an' I'm a goin' to appoint him bouncer. Jack,' says he, 'you kin consider yourself appointed.'

"The ol' Judge now looks over his specs at me, an' says he, 'Jake, have you got a lawyer?'

"'No,' says I, 'I ain't. I'm perfectly willin' to leave my case to the ignorance of the Court.'

"'What's that?' asks the ol' man, in a sudden quick, mad-like way, an' ol' Jack Johnson he took holt of his gun an' looked as savage as a cougar up a tree with a dog on the ground a tryin' to climb up, an' Alf Redfield an' the rest of the boys made ready for trouble. 'Oh,' said I, 'I ain't up on law an' law terms, an' maybe I didn't drive them words of yourn into the right corral. If I said anything not strictly accordin' to Hoyle, why I'm the last man in the world that won't take water.'

"'You have shore insulted the Court,' says ol' Mr. Doyle; 'but as you seem to be serenely repentant I'm a goin' to ride on without takin' any notice of it.'

"Then the old man he looked over his window panes an' says, 'Alf Redfield an' the rest of you, what have you got them guns on for in this here temple of justice?'

"Alf he just grinned an' said that him an' the rest of the boys 'd come there to see that Wylackie Jake wasn't a bein' made to play in a game where the cyards was branded. The ol' man 'lowed that he'd see that I got a even break, with no odds to the dealer, an' then he told Alf to round up all of the

weapons of everybody exceptin' the bailiff's, an' give 'em a tag for 'em, an' leave 'em outside of the door, as he didn't propose to have blind-eyed Justice brow-beat by a lot of six-shooters. This a havin' been done, the ol' man said that he was ready for the mill to commence grindin' out grist. Then he up an' says, 'Who's your first witness, Jack?' Jack he said, 'Tom Freeman.' Tom come forward, with his mustache all curled, an' raised up his left hand to be sworn. Tom an' everybody in the courtroom but me an' the Judge had his skypiece on. When Tom raised up his left hand to be cussed, ol' Jack Johnson come to life as quick an' sudden as a grouse flies out of a tree, an' he yanked his six-shooter out an' covered the witness with about the same kind of ugly action as a rattle-snake shows when he draws his flat head back to strike, an' says he, in his meanest tone, 'Take off your hat an' put up your other prop.' He added a few lively words, a usin' one expression that many a man in the West has been killed for usin'. Tom he up an' took off his hat, an' elevated his other hand, an' ol' Mr. Doyle says, in his blandest tone, 'That's right, Jack, maintain the dignity of the Court; that's your job.'

"Tom he says, 'This beats hell an' Arizony rolled together.'

"'Gentlemen,' says the ol' Judge, 'you mustn't let your angry natures slop over. Don't use such undignified language in the presence of this august Court or I'll be damned if I don't send you all to San Quentin for life.'

"Tom now began to tell about what he saw, an'

told the truth as nearly as Tom could. When he had finished with his statement, ol' Mr. Doyle he says, 'Do you want to examine this here witness, Jake?' 'No,' says I; 'he's told the truth as well as he knows how.'

" 'Careful,' says the ol' man to me, 'every word you admit is a goin' to be used again you.'

" 'That's all right,' says I. 'It's my deal later on, an' they'll be some right smart hands dealt out, too, an' don't you forget it.'

" Then Ernie Mason he clumb up on the stand an' told what he knowed, which wasn't enough to convict a chipmunk of stealin' a crumb of bread from a open Dutch oven. Then it was ol' Jack's turn. He ambled up to the stand an' sat down like he was perfectly to home, an' then he began to talk about the corpus gesti an' the res delicti, an' I says that I objected to the question of my innocence a bein' clouded over by a lot of Chink words. Ol' Jack said they was Latin words, that he'd heard his lawyer use 'em the time he was sent up. 'That's probably why you was sent up,' says I. 'If he'd spoke in plain United States, they's just the slimmest chance in the world the jury would a taken a more charitable view of your case.' Ol' Mr. Doyle now butted in, an' he says: 'Jack, I ain't up on them old-time languages, an' I wisht you'd confine your language in the English or Injun corrals, an' not go wanderin' around like a stray hog.'

" 'Now that everybody else is done a talkin',' says ol' Jack, 'I'll go on an' tell what I know about this case.'

"He told how him an' me had been a talkin', an' how he said somethin', an' that I'd doubted his word, an' that he got up from eatin' to stir the fire up, an' when he turned around I had him covered with my six-shooter; that I was shore a goin' to kill him, when Tom an' Ernie happened along an' saved him. Then ol' Mr. Doyle he up an' says, 'Any questions, Jake?'

"'Yes,' says I. 'All that he has said is a lie.'

"'Order,' says ol' Mr. Doyle. 'That ain't no question.' Ol' Jack he didn't even peep.

"'Your Honor,' says I, 'I have just called ol' Jack a liar right here in this temple where justice is dispensed with, an' he just sat right there on that witness stand an' never took it as a insult at all. Is he any different in the mountains than he is here?'

"'There's somethin' in that, Jake,' says the Judge. 'If a man's always a watchin' his honor like a hunter watches a deer lick, he's a goin' to shoot, irrespective of time, place and conditions.'

"'Now, Jack,' says I, 'you don't bear a good reputation, do you?'

"Jack 'lowed that it was shore better than mine.

"'You've been to San Quentin for murder, ain't you?' I asks.

"'Yes,' said ol' Jack.

"'That's all,' says I to him, an' he got off the stand.

"'Now, Alf Redfield,' says I, 'take the stand.'

"'What for?' asks the Judge.

"'Because I'm a goin' to prove by Alf an' Ike Wharton an' the rest of them boys,' says I, a sweepin'

my hand in their direction, like I was a lawyer, 'that ol' Jack Johnson's reputation in the community where he resides is about on a par with that of a sheep-killin' dog. Nobody that knows him believes a word he says, an' his own dog is scairt of him, a thinkin' that when he says "sick him," he means "come here."

" 'You needn't prove nothin' of that kind, Jake,' says the Judge. 'The Court'll take judicial recognizance of that,' says he. 'That's all the evidence I've got,' says I, 'except my own, an' I don't want to have to give that, if possible. I'd like for to ask ol' Jack one more question,' says I. 'Have the fees in this here case been paid?'

" 'Ol' Mr. Doyle he jumped up like some kid had put a pin in his chair an' he'd sat down on it, an' says he, 'I clean forgot all about the fees. Jack ain't paid 'em, an' the Court has wasted its time. Jake,' says he, 'you kin go back to your sheep, an' ol' Jack 'll go to jail for contempt of court for five days, and this court stands adjourned on this case to the Judgment Day.' "

BEYOND THE REALM OF LAW.

“Ernie” Mason, browned from exposure to the summer sun, his alert, knowing eyes gleaming under the brim of his “shore enough” Stetson, was standing on a crag, intently watching his charge of browsing sheep. By him stood his mindful collie, the sharp-pointed nose sniffing, the ears cocked. The brown, dirty-fleeced sheep sent forth their persistent and plaintive bleating. The view was surpassing from where the sheepherder stood. To the north was the white cone of Shasta, floating like a cloud in the sky. To the east lay ridge after ridge loaded with trees exuding the odor of balsam, and beyond was the broad and fertile valley of the Sacramento, now denuded of its golden harvest, and covered with a mantle of brown. Back of him was the barren peak of South Yallo Bally, a scrap heap of granite, the playground of cloud, frost and snow. On the west the precipitous Hammer Horn towered. The air was pure and cold, for there was snow in the vicinity. The sun was on the decline, and the shadows, the advance guard of the Army of Night, were beginning to creep down the deep cañons.

“Go fetch ‘em up, Andy,” shouted the herder. The dog darted off, and started the leaders down toward the flat where camp was. The herder

whistled, the dog tore back and forth, making the air vocal with excited, ringing barks. "Ernie," in a spirit of relaxation, drew his heavy revolver from the holster and fired several shots in the air, awakening echo after echo. Some of the sheep huddled together as the crashes echoed and re-echoed, but soon lost their fear, and presently the whole band made its way down the narrow serpentine trail. Down, down they went, clambering over rocks, through brush, and then through a spruce forest, closely watched by the dog and herder.

Soon they arrived at the flat, and "Ernie" betook himself to his camp. The sheep, now that the day's outing was over, became playful. The lambs jumped two or three feet in the air. Whole lines of the band charged back and forth across the flat, giving the appearance of an end run in a football game. All the time the air was full of their bleating.

The campfire burned brightly, the coffee boiled merrily and the frying venison sent forth a delicious odor. "Andy" sat near by, apparently very much interested in the preparations for supper. Now and again a few venturesome sheep began to climb out of the flat to browse. At a word from his master the dog ran up near them, turned them back, and then returned to his station by the fire.

The supper was soon ready, and "Ernie" said "grub pile" to himself, and set to. The mountain air and the day's work had given him a good appetite, and he was oblivious to everything except the hot coffee, the frying pan with its browned venison, and the bread in the Dutch oven.

The sun had gone behind the Hammer Horn. The purple outlines of the Bully Choops were becoming indistinct. The deep cañons were clothed dark in shadow. The crescent moon was just visible. Soon the night, with its bright train of stars, would come. The wind blowing through the tops of the arrowy spruce sounded like the monotonous beating of the surf on a rock-bound shore; the perpetual sound of falling water could be heard.

"Ba, ba-a-a." "Ernie" sat up straight. What was that? It couldn't come from his herd, it was too indistinct. "Ba, ba-a-a." He stood up. There must be another band of sheep in the vicinity, and he felt that probably the herder intended to camp with his charge on the very flat where he was encamped. He left his supper unfinished and went to the place where the trail entered the flat, excitement in his countenance. Yes, it was another herd, and it was coming to his flat.

He heard the loose rock crunching under the hoofs of the advancing sheep. He saw the herder in the rear leading a pack mule, and the ever-present dog was by the herder's side. "Ernie" walked up the trail to meet the herder.

"Hello, pardner," he said.

"Hello, yourself," answered the other herder, a dark, heavily bearded man.

"Kind o' late gettin' into camp to-night, eh? Where you strikin' out fer?" asked "Ernie."

"I'm a goin' to camp on this flat down here for a couple of days, and then I'm a goin' to drive 'em out to the Valley."

"Don't see how you're goin' to do that, pardner. I've got my band down there, and it wouldn't do to mix 'em."

"The hell you've got your band down there! Well, you just get 'em right offen there. That's my land."

"Your land? Why, all this land here's Uncle Sam's land. I don't go for you or anybody like you. I'm on Uncle Sam's land, and I'm one of his boys, and I'm a goin' to stay where I am if 'Old Betsy' 's good for anything, and I think she is—shoots like a rifle, and I kin hit a runnin' deer at 100 yards."

"Say, young man, you're talkin' kind o' loud. Fire uv youth and all that, I guess. That land's my land, and I'm a goin' to camp this here band uv sheep on it spite uv hell and high water. Go 'long and drive them sheep uv yourn offen there."

"Pardner, I'll call your bluff. You put four logs down on the ground and called that a cabin, didn't you? Never hold in the world. I put some timothy in last year—did better than the logs did. I'm young, but I wasn't born yesterday. I won't get off the flat. I've known about this flat since before the woods was burnt, and nobody has ever home-steaded it."

The intruder scowled. He looked at his rifle-stock peeping out of the case strapped to the pack saddle, then at the heavy revolver in "Ernie's" belt. He hesitated a moment, then blurted out:

"All right, young man, but I'll get even with you. You have plenty of cheek, and it seems to be all sharpened ready for use; but I'll fix you. S'long."

He turned the sheep down the cañon toward a little spring. He could camp there, but it was not a suitable place, being very rocky and steep. Down went the sheep, keeping up their bleating. Now and again the sharp whistle of the herder and the loud barking of his dog could be heard above the din. The sides of the cañon were heavily timbered, with here and there a rock slide. There were many fallen trees; besides, there was underbrush in places, so it took some time for the wrathful man to disappear.

When the din died away, "Ernie" went back to his supper. The fellow intended mischief, that was certain. They were far from civilization, and the mountains could tell no tales. No law of God or man was recognized where they were. Life was reduced to the primal, the elemental. The dark side of human nature had full play, for pretense and affectation stopped at the foothills. A shot from the brush, a scattered band of sheep, a circling cloud of buzzards —who would know?

"Ernie" decided to keep close watch until his troublesome visitor had departed. He finished his supper, and when darkness had come, carried his blankets beyond the glare of the firelight to the head of the cañon. He rolled up in his blankets, the "gun" near at hand, and lay looking at the stars. The night soon became very dark, for the moon was young, and sank behind a peak. Overhead the starry host twinkled, and the Milky Way trailed like a shadowy serpent across the heavens. The weather was cold, and there was a wind blowing that chilled to the bone. The bleating of the sheep had ceased. Save

for the sound of falling water and the rush of wind through the treetops, a Titanic silence prevailed.

In the morning of this day, when young Jim Holland threw away a lighted cigarette on the cañon side below where "Ernie" was sleeping, he did not foresee the results. He did not dream that his thoughtless act would start a fire that would lay waste the shaggy forest for miles around. He was too intently engaged in hunting deer to think of anything else. So when he dropped the lighted cigarette in a small heap of dry pine needles, he went on his way without giving the matter a thought. By night he had returned to his camp, miles distant. But the little disk of fire remained. It caught the pine needles, and then slowly spread. By night probably two acres had been burned over, and several logs were smoldering. It needed merely a brisk breeze and a royal fire would be under way.

"Ernie" soon dropped into a fretful sleep, "Andy" lying near. He rolled and tossed. Of a sudden he sat up, his eyes blinking. The moon had gone down a long time before. It was unheard of that it should go down and then rise again. Crackle, crackle—a sullen roar. Great God! That light wasn't from the moon. The cañon was full of flame, and the wind was forcing the fire up towards the flat. Huge tongues of flame darted up from dry logs, a brush heap crackled and burst into a blaze, little trains of fire crawled like serpents among the pine needles, long, arrowy flames flared up the trunks of moss-covered trees.

It flashed through "Ernie's" mind in an instant.

The forest was on fire. Crackle, crackle, rush and roar. On came the fire. A dry limb caught, and the flame darted out to the end and gave the appearance of a flash of lightning. "Ernie" went down the cañon a little way and found the heat intense. There was great danger that his charges would perish in the conflagration. Of course he could escape with his life, for he could run faster than the fire; but the sheep, he couldn't move them at night; they would "shore" stampede.

"Bang!"

"Ernie" jumped behind a rock out of the light. The bullet went whistling through the boulders.

"Damn a man who does his work in the dark!"

"Ernie" crawled back to the flat. The fire had not lighted it up yet to any appreciable extent. The sheep were not moving. They were not yet disturbed. With the assistance of "Andy," he rounded them up in the center of the meadow, and awaited developments. The fire ran swiftly up the cañon, and the flat became lighter and lighter. The sheep became uneasy; their plaintive bleat could be heard above the rush and roar of the fire.

On, on came the flame demon. With one final rush it reached the head of the cañon, and darted like lightning up a tall, dry spruce tree that a former fire had killed. The sheep began to run back and forth on the flat. The heat was intense. In a few seconds "Ernie" knew that his charges would begin to stampede. He would try and drive them up among the rocks, where there was no timber. The flat became as light as day.

“Bang!”

A bullet hit the ground at his feet. He saw the flash of his enemy's rifle, and, pulling his heavy revolver from the holster, fired at the spot.

Ah! What was that?

A loud wail of despair.

“Oh, Christ! Bitten by a rattlesnake! Oh, God! Oh, God! Oh, oh!” came to his ears over the rush and roar of the flames.

The fire cracked and crackled, blazed and roared. The sheep became more excited and restless. “Ernie” began to drive his charges toward the rocks. The voice of his enemy could be heard above the roar of the flames. Over the bleating of the sheep the shrill, sharp bark of the collie could be distinguished.

“I'm goin' to die, but I'll take you with me. I'll kill you for settin' out that fire!” yelled a frenzied voice.

“Ernie” saw a haggard, wild-looking, black-bearded man hurl himself through the flames, his rifle in the hollow of his arm.

“Say your prayers, young man. We haven't got much longer to live. I feel the poison a workin'.”

He drew his rifle toward his shoulder. “Ernie” heard the lever click.

“Ernie” drew his revolver.

“Oh, God! Oh, God! This pain is frightful. Oh, oh!” moaned the snake-bitten man. He staggered. He tried to raise his rifle toward “Ernie,” then he fell over, writhing and twisting. “Buzz, buzz, damn you, buzz!” shrieked the horror-stricken man.

“Ernie,” fearful of some trick, sought refuge be-

hind a boulder. He peered over it. He saw his enemy roll and writhe; he heard his curses and imprecations. For a moment he would lie still; for an instant his tongue would be silent. Then he would have a spasm. Then words would come forth in one long, continuous monologue of mixed prayers and curses. Finally "Ernie" decided to go to his aid, and stepped from behind the boulder. The injured man sat up; he reached for his rifle. "Ernie" stepped back to his position of security. He looked over and saw the man calmly put the muzzle of his rifle to his head, pull the trigger, and roll over.

Flames chased flames over logs and through brush. They seemed to compete for the honor of being first up a tree. The sheep began to climb up out of the flat, but the fierce flames and their rushing and roaring frightened them.

The mournful sound of the bleating of the sheep blended with the wild and angry roar of the flames. There was a rush, hundreds of hoofs hammered the loose rocks. There was a sound as of crushing and crowding trampling. Some of the frightened sheep dashed straight into the flames, their eyes distended with terror. The mountain side was lit up for yards and yards by the flaring flames. Clumps of spruce and alder, mingled with gigantic boulders, stood out in bold relief. When the sheep stampeded, the flat was almost encircled by a flaming wall. Now that "Ernie's" charges had destroyed themselves, he sought his own safety. He climbed up on the summit, the scrap heap of decomposed granite, and

looked down upon the sea of angry flames. Above the rush and roar he thought he detected the startled braying of a mule and the shrill ringing bark of a dog.

For two days "Ernie" tried to round up some of the scattered sheep which had survived the wild night stampede, but his effort was well nigh fruitless. When he reached the valley, of the 1,000 he had started for the mountains with in the month of May, he could scarcely muster 200.

Far down in the cañon when "Ernie" left was a circling cloud of huge, black birds, that for many days feasted upon the carcasses of sheep that had perished, and at night bears and panthers growled and glared as they crunched bones.



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